

"Laden with Golden Grain."

THE
ARGOSY.

EDITED BY
MRS. HENRY WOOD.

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By ELLEN EDWARDS.

GRACE'S LETTER.

J. SWAIN.

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By M. ELLEN EDWARDS.

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 "Alice looked up Enquiringly."
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 In the Library at Lowlevels.

THE ARGOSY.

JULY, 1877.

GABRIEL'S APPOINTMENT.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. SALISBURY'S DIAMONDS.

OUR young artist, Alice Kerr, with Grace Pyne as her attendant, and Martin acting as courier, started for North Devon in a very different style from that in which she had commenced her journey to London. The journey itself was no less a contrast. She had no adventures, and met with no misfortunes, and her companions afforded her very little amusement. It had been her private wish to have Lucy Pyne instead of Grace, but this could not be gratified; and Grace, though attentive and respectful, was too silent and thoughtful to be an interesting companion. Indeed, Alice held to her first opinion, that however good and industrious she might be, there was nothing interesting about her at all. Her dress was too respectable, her complexion too colourless, to be of the least use in a picture; and as for any romance being connected with one so demure and grave, it was simply absurd to think of it. The depths of tenderness and suffering that lay hidden beneath that plain exterior, Alice had not skill to discover. She little dreamed that all she had ever felt, or thought she felt, all her poetical theories on woman's love and patience under disheartening circumstances, were cold, indeed, compared with poor Grace's experience of the reality.

There are many bitter troubles in life, and each heart knows its own; but few can equal the pang of finding that the treasure of the heart—we will not say its idol, for faithful love is too holy a thing to be called idolatry—is not the pure gold we had believed it—that its glitter is dross, and its ring untrue. To love and lose is hard enough—to love without return is harder still; but to love, and begin to wonder that we can, is hardest and worst of all.

It had been gradually dawning upon Grace's mind, during the last few weeks, that Darch was trying to work her up, by degrees, to do something which he durst not openly mention. Whether to show his own power, or to weaken her scruples by force of habit, he had persisted, latterly, in compelling her to meet him at such hours and in such places as must expose her to observation, and make concealment almost a matter of deceit. The misery it was to her to conceal what she did and felt from those she loved and trusted, was brought to a climax by the attempt referred to by Honor, in her conversation with Lucy; though, as often happens when only half a secret is overheard, the girl had misstated the facts. There had been a talk, at the table of Granny Hughes, about the attempt on Mr. Bruce; and Tonio, who was present, had suggested, as if half in joke half in earnest, that the gentleman wore a charm round his neck, on which his luck and that of his love depended; and Darch had looked at Grace, and whispered that if it were so, it would be worth any risk to get it. On their being alone together in the street he had reverted to the subject, and said, if such things were true, that by getting a charm into your own hands you could secure your own happiness and that of the person you loved, it was your duty to risk being called hard names. He was sure, if it came to the point, that his Grace would be true-hearted enough to take her chance—that she would rather all the parsons and ladies condemned her, unjustly, than let slip an opportunity of making their two selves rich and happy. Her answers at first were good-humouredly playful, as if the subject could only be treated as a joke; but he persisted so warmly in the argument that she at last grew alarmed, and so pointedly inquired into his meaning that he was obliged to turn the laugh against her, for having supposed he could be in earnest. The very next day, as we have seen, he summoned her in the middle of her work; and this time his proposal could not be supposed to be in jest, for he wanted her to consent to a secret marriage. He would leave her perfectly free afterwards, and not claim her till her home was ready, but he could not rest till she was his own by right at last, and if she loved him she would consent.

If she loved him! What a mockery of words it seemed to her, when he would not see that such a step, with all the deceit it must involve, would lower her in everyone's eyes, whether the truth were discovered or not! Her refusal—which no persuasion could make her retract—either excited his real resentment, or led to his assuming a resentful tone; and they parted on sorrowful terms—each reproaching the other—though every word she uttered was a stab to Grace's own heart. Her one desire then was to put herself out of his reach for a time; and when a difficulty arose about an attendant for Alice Kerr, she had offered herself to Miss Leicester with an eagerness which must have struck that young lady, but for her own pre-occupation of mind. Warmly interested for her two humble friends, she hoped their prospects would be permanently brightened by becoming

members of her future household, until they could settle in homes of their own; and it was peculiarly convenient that Grace fancied going down to Highlevels, as she could look about the village and neighbourhood, and make acquaintance with her probable abode.

It must be remembered that Grace had not the remotest suspicion of any real design against Mr. Bruce; the case had been put as a visionary supposition: all she guessed was that it referred to something on which Darch Williams durst not be more explicit. She had left London without daring to confess to anyone that she was flying from the voice, the touch, the eyes, for which she had watched and waited so long; but the temptation lay in the possibility of yielding to his influence and losing her own self-respect. And now, as she sat in her corner, trying to read a book that had been given her by Mr. Forrest, she was torturing herself with doubts as to whether she ought not to have stayed—whether Darch would give her up in anger, or whether he would follow her, when he found she was gone.

Her personal comfort, no less than that of Miss Kerr, was sedulously attended to by Martin throughout the journey, till he finally handed them into the carriage which Mrs. Salisbury had sent to meet them at the station. Alice's heart sank a little when she wished him good-bye; she made him promise to come and see her at Highlevels, especially if he had any news from London; and as she drove away into the unknown region stretching around her, she felt almost as nervous as when she first arrived at Greville Gardens. How much she longed to be there again, is not to be told: but for the shame of giving way before Grace Pyne, her courage would probably have failed more than once during the drive.

Her reception, however, went far to restore her spirits; the sight of the youthful face and figure touched Mrs. Salisbury's heart at once, so as to give spontaneous warmth to her hospitality. Alice Kerr's appearance, at this time, was so much altered for the better, through the taste and liberality of her friends, that there was no incongruity in her being accompanied by a maid, and the dress and manner of Grace Pyne pleased Mrs. Salisbury directly. Everything was done to make the weary travellers feel at home, and Alice did her best to requite the courtesy shown her, and to be lively and agreeable—conscious all the while that the mention of Edith or Gabriel would bring back that aching of the throat which she had with so much difficulty overcome. The effort was perceived and appreciated: it was impossible not to feel interested in one, so young and so situated, courageously endeavouring to fight her way through the world; and Mrs. Salisbury, whose sympathies were never backward where an orphan was concerned, found her doubts as to Sir Jesse's motives fast melting away. She was even disposed to give him credit for more benevolence than she had always found possible; and instead of enduring her visitor good-humouredly, for Myra's sake, felt drawn towards her on her own.

Repressing her granddaughter's eager desire to overwhelm the guest with questions, and drag her all over the house to look at her treasures, she took care that Alice was refreshed and rested, without a word having been said of the portrait—persuading her to retire early, and accompanying her to her room, to see that she had all she wanted.

Grace had been busy already, and Alice's trunk was unpacked and everything in its place; and the elder lady's eyes glanced with satisfaction at the books, mostly fresh and new, which had accompanied the young traveller from the city.

"You have good companions here, I see, my dear; your art will thrive all the better for their friendship," she observed, with a sigh that betrayed the presence of a hidden sorrow, such as her exterior rarely revealed. Her "good night" was accompanied by a few words of blessing which thrilled to Alice's heart, and brought the dew into her eyes—so strange was the sound, and so sweet.

"It must be like what one has read of having a grandmamma of one's own," she thought. "Martin was quite right in telling me I should like her. I am afraid she thinks me quite a child. To-morrow I will show her what I really am."

Alas! the morrow, which was to do so much, found the artist in the depths of ignominious misery. A little imprudence and neglect of precautions on the journey had brought on raging toothache, and her day was spent in alternate fits of restlessness and prostration; a piteous apology for neglect of duty being her response to Mrs. Salisbury's kind attentions. Mrs. Salisbury was tender of her conscientious feelings, and comforted her with good-natured assurances that no time was really lost, as Myra had a cold, and would, most likely, not have been able to sit. They would both be the better for waiting another day. And she brought in a pile of books and engravings, and bade her lie on the sofa, and try to beguile the weary time; and if she wished for medical advice, a messenger should be sent for Dr. Nelson.

Alice thanked her gratefully, but in private resolved to hold out against that.

"I don't want the doctor, Grace," she said, when they were alone, "but I do wish I had Mr. Jones's bottle of chloroform. There is none in the house, and it would do me more good than anything."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am—*whose* bottle did you say?"

"Oh, don't you know the story of Mr. Jones and the chloroform, which he had for his toothache, at the hotel where Mr. Bruce slept the first night he was in London—how the poor man mistook his own bedroom, and tried Mr. Bruce's door in the night, and was so frightened at having done it, that in his hurry to get away he dropped his fur cap, with the phial in it?"

"I never heard it mentioned, Miss Kerr. It was a mistake, of course."

"So Mr. Bruce says : but the wise Erasmus does not agree with him. His Leatherstocking genius cannot admit the possibility of making such a blunder. He thinks—but you must not repeat this, Grace."

"Certainly not, Miss Kerr."

"Well, he thinks that mischief was intended—as some one really does follow them about. I've seen him myself."

"My dear !" exclaimed Grace, startled out of her propriety. "What is he like ?"

"That I cannot tell you, for they said he was disguised ; but I remember his cough, for I heard it one night at the Mission Chapel. I only wish he would drop his remedy at my door, and then I might hope for some sleep !"

Alice did get some sleep, however, in the course of the day, without the chloroform, and was sufficiently relieved to accept a visit from Myra. That young lady, who had been with difficulty kept out of her room till then, entered big with mystery and importance, and having closed the door with her finger on her lips, took a seat opposite Alice with a whisper. "I want to show you my gold."

The fragment of a smile, which was all Alice could do, being taken for assent, Myra produced an Indian casket of sandal-wood and silver, unlocked it with due solemnity, and took out, one by one, about a dozen coins of different countries ; expatiating, as she did so, on the value of each, and the possibility that some day they might be worth a great deal more. Papa always sent her one on her birthday : it was so much better to have gold than anything else. And her eyes, as she gazed at her hoard, showed how firmly she believed what she said.

The artist-spirit began to stir in spite of the aching nerve ; Alice's first impression that so heavy-looking a child would never make a picture, was at once removed. That strange effect of "gold's sacred hunger" in a young and rather plain face had a powerful fascination ; pain and weariness were for the moment forgotten ; her picture danced before her eyes—she only longed to begin.

"You are thinking of something," said Myra, suddenly, as she became aware of the gaze which was learning her features by heart. "Have you any gold to show me of your own ?"

"My art is my gold," said Alice. "I earn it by drawing, and then the gold comes."

"I wish I could earn it too. I did find some once, under an apple-tree. Look here !" and she showed Martin's nugget on her chain, "I dug that up, my own self ; and when those nice men come again, I mean to dig up some more. I'll show you where, if you promise not to dig too."

Alice promised readily ; saying she had heard enough about gold-digging to prevent her ever wishing for a share.

"Oh, then you can tell me all about it, can't you ? I tried to read some of the books, but they are too stupid."

"Well, if you sit like a good child, I will."

"I don't want to sit like a good child; I want to sit like a rich one," said Myra, decidedly. "Any dirty school-girl can be good, you know."

"Oh!" said Alice, somewhat disconcerted, and vaguely wondering what Edith and Mr. Forrest would have said; "then I will tell you how it shall be. You shall be drawn with a basket of flowers at your feet, which you have just overturned in your hurry to take up some beautiful jewels."

"Grandmamma's jewels? Oh, dear, how delightful! But why shouldn't I put them on? Papa said perhaps I should."

"No, that would only have a commonplace effect, as if you were just anybody's child dressed up in play. I want you to look as if you belonged to some interesting story, in which everything depended on your choice between the flowers and the jewels, and you had just chosen what you liked best."

"Oh, that would be the jewels, of course."

"Of course. And then, all the time I am drawing, you will have them to look at; but if you were to put them on, you would not see them at all."

"No more I should. Oh, how happy I shall be! I wish to-morrow was come, and that you were quite well."

"So do I, I am sure; but we must have patience. I will show you a sketch meanwhile which will explain how you must sit."

But the sketch had been put away, and only Grace knew where; and on inquiry it appeared that Grace was gone out, and had been absent some time. The reason of her absence was satisfactorily explained on her return, for she brought back a small phial of camphorated chloroform.

"I spoke to the doctor himself, Miss Kerr. He gave me that for you, and promised to look in to-morrow."

"Just what I didn't want: but thank you all the same. It was very good of you to take this trouble, Grace; only ——"

"No trouble at all, ma'am; I promised the ladies that you should be properly attended to. And I saw Mr. Martin at the doctor's, and he sent his duty: and if there be anything you want done, he is at your service at any hour you please. Those were Mr. Bruce's orders."

"How kind they all are! how much kinder everybody is than I thought for!" said the young portrait painter as she applied her specific, and prepared herself for rest, advising Grace, who was evidently very tired with her walk, to follow her example, and secure a good long night. Full of hopes for the future, and partially relieved for the present, Alice little thought what a terrible suspicion had been roused in her attendant's mind, to drive quiet sleep from her pillow. Martin had not told her much—his answers had been short and guarded; but he had said enough to confirm Alice's story, and fill

Grace's heart with such fear and doubt, as to whether she had done wrong in leaving town, that half the night passed in tears—only soothed at last by prayer.

To the credit of Dr. Nelson it must be stated that his prescription had due effect, and the artist found herself next day, if a little pulled down in strength, sufficiently free from pain to be ready for work. Indeed, Myra's impatience was hardly greater than her own, and the morning was so clear and bright, the air so deliciously sweet, that, as she said, it was hard to believe they were on the same island as St. Edmund's district, where it was easier to get anything than light, except sweetness. Even in the act of establishing her drawing-board at the library window, pronounced to be the most favourable for artistic purposes, Alice could not help lingering awhile to admire the distant landscape, now visible through the leafless trees—the mingling of blue, purple, and grey, the graceful sweep of the outlines, where the moor closed in the woodland, and, above all, the far-off dip on the horizon, marking the points between which a good glass could sometimes detect the sea. It was all so beautiful it seemed a pity not to go out and sketch; and there was something that almost jarred on the harmony of the scene when Mrs. Salisbury entered, carrying in her hand a strong leather box, and wearing an expression of grave uneasiness which had not been on her face before. Alice's first idea was that she thought her dilatory, and she was stammering out something about making up for lost time when Miss Strahan was ready, but she found that Mrs. Salisbury was thinking of something else—something that she had a little difficulty in mentioning. She set the box on the table, and stood for a few minutes looking down upon it, her fingers playing absently on the lid.

"Pray, Miss Kerr," she said at last, with an effort, "was it an idea of yours that a child like Myra should have her likeness taken dressed out in diamonds?"

"Mine! I was against it from the first: only Sir Jesse was afraid of her being disappointed."

"You understood, then, it was her own wish?"

"Yes, and as it had been a promise, we consulted how it could be arranged without making the picture ridiculous. I suggested something of this kind," and she showed her pen-and-ink sketch.

"I see," was Mrs. Salisbury's reply, as she looked thoughtfully at the spirited outline, and then at the face of the artist. "And Sir Jesse approved of your suggestion?"

"Yes, I am sure he did."

There was a short silence before Mrs. Salisbury spoke again.

"Miss Kerr," she said, "young as you are, I know, from what I have heard of you, that you have had some experience in trouble, and have bravely borne your share. This makes it easier for an old woman like myself to speak to you of mine."

Alice coloured and bowed, touched by the appeal: but wondering to what it would lead.

"You were made aware, before you came, of my poor child's infirmity of mind, which makes her training and education a work of so much anxiety. We are allowed to hope that she will outgrow it, and meanwhile we oppose her fancies as little as possible, as direct opposition has a perilous effect on her nerves. She has a strange power of imagination, and lives, at times, in a world of her own—a world undreamed of by most children, for, singular as it may seem, and sad as it is to watch, her present dreams are all of one object—the acquisition of money."

"Ah!" said Alice, keenly. This agreed with her own impression, but she did not like to say so.

"These jewels of mine," continued Mrs. Salisbury, unlocking the box, "are to be hers after my death, as they would have been her mother's, and the poor child has become so impressed with the idea of their value that a sight of them has latterly been her highest reward. Valuable they are—very valuable—and I mention it, to justify a precaution I wish to impress upon you. It may be troublesome and inconvenient, but I think you will kindly forgive that, Miss Kerr."

"I will do anything you wish—I don't mind what it is," said Alice with perfect sincerity.

"Then promise me never, on any consideration, to leave these jewels for a moment unguarded. If you are interrupted in your work, and wish to leave the room yourself, lock them up in the box, and take away the key. If you do it as a matter of course, you will have little difficulty; but if you yield to Myra once on the subject, she will always grow excited when she has to give them up. You will keep my wishes in mind?"

She held out her hand to her young guest, who had only just time to return its pressure, when Myra, her hair and dress newly arranged for the occasion, came in to take her place.

The face of the poor child, when established in her wicker chair, with an overturned basket at her feet, whose contents were to be supplied later, was so mournfully happy that it went to the heart of her painter. What a jangling of sweet bells must be going on to fill so young a brain with such discordant notes! For it was, palpably, not the pleasure of looking at, or the desire of wearing, something beautiful and costly, reserved for state occasions and grown-up people—any girl younger than Myra might have thought that a treat. It was the keen look of the trader—and that of the lower, more sordid kind—which disfigured the childish countenance, and was, in itself, so unsuited to its shape and colouring that Alice was irresistibly reminded of the old Irish legend—in which the changeling elf, with its centuries of incomprehensible existence, appears in the form of the stolen babe. But she was not the less alive to the impetus

which that very incongruity gave to her own fancy, and was as eager to begin as Myra was to sit. All minor preliminaries being arranged, Mrs. Salisbury unlocked the leathern box and took out the diamonds.

They were arranged in a complete set for a lady's wear—necklace, earrings, brooch, and bracelet. By far the most valuable, from the size and colour of the stones, was the necklace, as Alice saw, and it frightened her to have such a treasure in her charge. Mrs. Salisbury smiled a little at her naïve wonder; but the smile changed to sadness as she placed the necklace and earrings in Myra's hand, and drew back to observe the effect.

"I shall be grateful to you, my dear," she said, kindly, "if you help me to connect these things with hope, and talent, and energy. The artist who brings such qualities to such a work is richer than these could make her."

The work began, and so prosperously, thanks to the goodwill of painter and sitter, that considerable progress had been effected before they were interrupted by a visit from Dr. Nelson. No one else would have been admitted, but Myra was eager to show him the jewels; and Mrs. Salisbury's nervous anxiety was relieved by his arrival in time to judge if the excitement were too much for her brain. He was very kind and pleasant, Alice thought, and displayed great interest in the portrait, standing behind her chair for some little time to watch her proceedings—and letting a sigh escape him, which recalled what she had heard of his sorrows. His wife had, indeed, been gifted with a considerable amount of taste and execution; and it was not till he had mastered his voice that he could begin to criticise.

When he did, it was to find fault with Alice's anatomy—a subject on which she was always rather sensitive, knowing it to be her weak point. She argued, rather petulantly, that one couldn't be always attending to those little things when full of the general effect.

"You would find your own general effect rather peculiar, if those little things were *not* attended to," said the doctor. His attention was called away by Myra, who wanted him to guess at the value of the necklace. Without committing himself on that point, he admired them to her heart's content, and told her several curious facts about diamonds, and the perils endured in their pursuit—perils which to her imagination possessed a wonderful charm. Any adventures or difficulties that made you rich were well worth going through—she only wished she could meet with some.

"Ah," he said, "if these gems could speak, perhaps their tale would make you think differently. We read of sermons in stones—but stones like these deal mostly in tragedies; and their brightness, if we knew all, would seem but a shining mockery!"

The light was playing on the treasured jewels as he spoke, and if things inanimate could indeed have found a voice to answer, they must have laughed him to scorn. Little did he know what their

revelation would have been—or that Myra's idea of their past was not more remote from the truth than his own!

"Your gold-finder has taken possession of Lowlevels," he said presently; when, the sitting being over, Mrs. Salisbury was replacing the diamonds in their cases. "He is a cool hand, and did what I could not have done: he cleared out old Medland and his wife at a day's warning. They had had notice before that the house was being sold, but they rather hoped to keep possession some time longer, and were sorely vexed at such prompt dismissal. But Mr. Martin was obdurate, and he is actually there all alone, except a dog, which he bought at the inn. Excuse me, Mrs. Salisbury—may I look at that brooch for one moment?"

She gave it to him in some surprise. He looked at it very earnestly—weighed it in his hand, and carried it to the light. All their eyes were upon him, curious to discover the meaning of this proceeding. He took a magnifying glass out of his pocket, but that did not seem to satisfy him. At last he tried one of the brilliants on the window. Mrs. Salisbury smiled.

"One would almost imagine you doubted their being real," she said, a little offended.

"I told you I had heard curious facts about diamonds, and I only wanted to try an experiment," was his reply, as he handed back the jewel. He took leave with a smiling face, but it changed to thoughtfulness and perplexity as he drove away.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE CLOCK STRUCK AT LOWLEVELS.

ANYONE who knows how much a new event is appreciated in a small village, will understand what a boon to the gossips of Level Bridge and its neighbourhood were the proceedings of Martin the Iron-hand. Mine host and hostess of the inn, who were to a certain degree in his confidence and aided and abetted him to the best of their ability, were not a little amused by the various reports that reached them respecting the strange behaviour of this new-comer; whom the dispossessed Medlands bitterly denounced as the most unfeeling, inconsiderate person they had ever come across. His offences, in their eyes, were twofold: first, in enforcing their prompt departure, and secondly, in keeping watch over them when they did depart, whereby their little plans for stripping the premises of all available booty were cruelly frustrated. They had, indeed, fairly over-reached themselves by their delay; ample warning had been given, that they might have time to pack up their own effects; but the hope of getting an early crop out of the garden (which they always told Dr. Nelson barely kept them and the pig in vegetables) made them hold on as long as possible, and consequently their opportunity was lost.

The doctor, whose property they had learned to look upon as their own, having no time to investigate the matter, allowed them to take the live stock, with the exception of some of the poultry, which he presented to Martin, in the joy of getting this painful investment fairly off his hands. A fine young setter, purchased from the landlord, with whom it had been left by a traveller, was also to accompany Mr. Bruce's confidential servant into his new quarters; and Mrs. Medland loudly declared among her intimates that times was changed indeed when gentlemen's servants gave themselves such airs, and wore shooting-jackets, and stood over you with guns in their hands when you was packing your bits of things, till you was that terrified you wouldn't have slept under the same roof with him, not if it was ever so! Patting his dog, too, with such a look in his wicked eyes, as much as to say that for half a farthing he'd let it fly at your throat. She didn't know what sort of a gentleman the master could be to send down such a person, as that, to turn out poor honest, hard-working creatures; and she only hoped he'd never be sorry for it—that was all!

Nobody else seemed particularly sorry: the general impression being that the hardworking creatures had had a capital berth on very easy terms, and had made a good thing of it altogether. But the mysterious interest excited in Martin was enhanced by the reports of his skill as a marksman—reports which he rather encouraged—with the additional comment that, according to the custom of bush life, he always kept his gun ready for action.

At the suggestion of his friend the hostess, he employed a poor widow of her acquaintance to clean the place after the departure of its occupants, while he was laying in stores for his independent house-keeping; and fain would that good woman have entered his service altogether; for, as she said, no young gentleman could be civilier or more open-handed. It quite went to her heart to leave him there by himself at night; if he would but have asked her to stop, she wouldn't have been afraid of nothing, not she, with him and his dog and his gun to take care of her. No; she hadn't seen or heard nothing in the house; that Mrs. Medland had left muddle and dust enough to keep her hard at it, and she had no time for thinking of noises. She would have cooked and done everything for the young gentleman, if he would have let her stop; but he said he liked best to be quite alone.

There is no doubt that this was true, strange as it appeared to lovers of conversation. It was with an unwonted sense of repose that Erasmus Martin found himself once more solitary, though in a dwelling as unlike the log-house of his boyhood as the valley of the Level to the Australian bush. He lingered at first on the drive before the door, listening to the rush of the river below, and looking up at the starry sky. His dog, who had attached himself to his new master with the passionate ardour of love at first sight, lay quietly on the

stone step, pretending sleepiness, but watching him under his eyelids, with every hair on the alert, ready to bound up and go after him to the world's end. The touch, the voice, the ways of this new lord were ecstasy to Settler's sport-loving heart, after his endurance of honourable captivity among commonplace and uncongenial spirits; and he was ripe for the wildest frolic ever devised by man or beast. But the longing was unshared by his master, to whom the silence of that lonely spot, in the mild April evening beneath the stars, was more like rest than anything he had known since he came to England.

The state of siege in which they had lived during the last few weeks had kept his senses always on the stretch, while wearied out by the unceasing noise of the city. His mind, meanwhile, had been hourly receiving new impressions, making new discoveries, finding fresh food for thought, and straining after the variety of knowledge which flowed as unconsciously from David Forrest's conversation as teaching did from his daily life. To the good mission-priest, accustomed to encounter every degree of stolidity, vacuity, and indifference, the intercourse with such intelligent ignorance as Martin's had been so attractive that he overlooked the risk of pouring too much into his mind at once. Night after night they had sat up together, the one relating, explaining, or quoting from the stores at his command; the other listening, marvelling, drinking it all in, and occasionally asking a question: and but for Miss Thirza and Gabriel, neither would have had his proper share of rest. And, reluctant as the neophyte had been to leave London, it was a positive relief to be there on his lonely watch, leaning on his gun, and with a task before him more familiar to his experience than dealing with books—the task of a secret search under the eye of a hidden enemy.

That he should be followed and watched he could not doubt; it was one reason for consenting to occupy the post, so as to direct attention from his friends. He had been too fully taken up with the business in hand to think of anything else since his arrival; and now that he was alone, his mind and he seemed for the first time to come face to face, so as to allow him to see in what respect it had suffered change.

The day had not yet come for him to wish, with Alexander Selkirk, that he could return to his former life; on the contrary, he wondered now that he had been content with it so long. Certainly, were he to sail back to-morrow, he could never be again the same man—these cravings, yearnings, aspirations after something greater, wiser, better than his own experience and knowledge could show, would never be satisfied with what had sufficed him then. And yet, in this new world, so full of unfathomed wonders, what place was there for him? What was he fit for, but to do what he was doing, and to clear the way for Gabriel's peace?

"They shall not break his heart by touching his wife while I am here," he said aloud, as he threw his gun over his shoulder. "Come,

Settler! as we are the whole garrison, we must visit our outposts. It will be sharp practice if they disturb us the first night; but we won't make it easier for them than we can help."

The dog leaped up joyfully: and he took the liveliest interest in the manner in which Martin made the round of the outer fastenings, securing each with some contrivance of his own, so as to render it impossible to enter the premises, except by climbing walls or forcing fences. Having performed the same office to the doors and shutters of the house, he lighted a candle, and went through every room, satisfying himself that there was no living creature within the walls but Settler and himself; and that anyone trying to enter would not find it an easy matter under the circumstances.

How it had been entered formerly was another question.

The furniture, according to agreement, had been left in the house. Mr. Bruce was to have the use of it for a year, and then take it, if he pleased, at a valuation; but all looked as rooms will look that are not inhabited—dreary, cold, uninviting—all but the dining-room, where his attentive charwoman had laid the cloth for his supper, and the kitchen, where it was keeping hot before the fire. In both of these the elements of comfort were to be found; but Martin was not yet ready to cultivate them. The doctor's sad story ran in his mind, and so did the solution of the problem which had occurred to him when he heard it first—that there must have been some secret passage by which the entrance had been made the result of which was so cruel.

His tool-chest was in the hall, ready for action; and, exchanging his gun for a hammer, he went about the passages, testing every doubtful spot, and keenly listening for anything like a hollow sound—but to no purpose. The enigma was not to be guessed so easily, and he abandoned the attempt for the present, proceeding with Settler into the kitchen, to fetch the supper; which they discussed together, to their mutual satisfaction. Over his evening pipe, the hunter revolved his plans for the next day, and then opened one of the volumes with which David Forrest had half filled his portmanteau; being just as indifferent to the question as to whether any attempt to shake his nerves would be made that night, as Settler was to the contents of his book.

A couple of hours passed; and Settler, who had given up all idea of any more fun before bedtime, had enjoyed a luxurious nap after his good supper—dreaming of happy hunting-grounds, where birds and rabbits almost asked to be caught—when the dog suddenly became aware, in some mysterious fashion, that all was not right. He lifted his nose from his feathery paws, pricked up his ears, and looked at his master. The book was open on the table, but the reader had sunk back asleep. Settler rose slowly, smelt, and listened—couldn't tell what to make of it, but was sure there was *something*. He poked his nose into Martin's hand. The hunter was roused in a moment.

"What is it, old man?"

Settler answered with a little whine, partly suggestive, partly inquiring; and Martin in his turn listened, and perceived that the dog was right. There was a sound he could not account for: and it seemed to be somewhere *in* the house, not outside. He opened the dining-room door: Settler rushed out barking, and when he had been called in and silenced, there was nothing else to be heard. Again did Martin patrol passage and room, halting ever and anon to listen; he could detect no clue to the mystery, though more convinced than ever that his conjecture was correct.

Some one must have the means of coming in upon him, all his defences notwithstanding. If only he could find out how!

"Makes one think of that time with the bushrangers, Settler," he said, caressing the dog's silky ears, as they sat again by the fire, and his memory went back to one of the fierce scenes of his boyhood—his father's log-house giving shelter to two or three exhausted fugitives pursued by thieves—the preparation for defence, with such means as lay within reach—the hours of watching and expectancy—his father's stern, set firmness of feature, as he handled his loaded piece, and the bitter laugh with which, when the alarm proved to be unfounded, he laid aside the weapon, observing that they knew better than to molest one of their own fraternity. What that meant, his son had never dared to ask, and for a time had forgotten it altogether; but it seemed to come back now as if it had been yesterday; and again he seemed to hear the deep, mournful voice in the stillness of the night, moaning out the words of that awful service: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land mark."

"This won't do, Settler," he said at last, springing up from his seat, as if to shake off the sadness creeping over him; "we will take one more good hunt, and then we will go to bed. They shall not have to boast that we could not sleep for fear of them. Let us see what time it is by the big clock. I must have a look at it to-morrow, and see if I can make it strike."

The clock thus referred to was a large old-fashioned piece of workmanship, in an oaken case, which had been let into the wall opposite the dining-room door. According to Mrs. Medland's account, it never struck now, though no doubt it did once upon a time. It was wound up weekly, and set, when anybody took the trouble. On examining it now, Erasmus soon discovered whence the recent sound had proceeded, for the clock had run down. He rectified that small disaster, and was consulting his own watch—Gabriel's gift—to set it correctly, when he was surprised to see Settler, who had followed at his heels, thrust his nose inquisitively into the case, and show a decided intention of rummaging at the back. On being spoken to, he gave a little whine, and presently growled, but all Martin's searching for any visible cause was fruitless. There might be rats in the walls, for all he knew; and, at any rate, he could press his investigations

no further by candle-light. To make assurance doubly sure, he took off the old broken lock of the clock-case, and quickly replaced it with one of his own, of which he had a supply in his tool-chest. This done, he went to bed, and slept without any further disturbance.

His time was fully taken up the next day with sundry workmanlike jobs he had planned beforehand for the baffling of intruders; and he only stirred from the house to give Settler a run—admitting no visitors inside the gate, to which his faithful widow brought him a supply of milk and bread. Such of the curious folk that hung about the place, hoping to glean some incident which would make a sensation, could only report that they heard hammering; and this they were quite welcome to hear. Late in the evening, Martin and his dog appeared in the village, on their way to the post-office, and several idlers listened with eager interest to hear him ask for his letters—sympathising audibly with his evident disappointment on receiving none. But when the doctor's gig drove up, and the doctor himself beckoned Martin to conference, the interest deepened into excitement, and everybody felt it would be only public-spirited in the two to hold their conversation aloud.

It did not take long; a few friendly questions and answers—a message, an inquiry, and expressions of mutual good understanding, constituted nearly the whole of it; and then Dr. Nelson drove on, and Martin turned his face homeward, tempted by the freshness of the evening air to take the longest way round. It ended, of course, in his going further than he meant, and it was nearly ten o'clock when he put the key in the lock of the house door and let himself in.

As he did so, to his surprise, the refractory old clock began to strike; and to strike, moreover, in so sharp and flurried a fashion that Martin stood still for a minute, staring at it in astonishment. Settler, however, showed his teeth, and began to demonstrate an intention of looking into the matter—which was nipped in the bud by a peremptory order to lie down. A twinkle in Martin's eye betrayed a grim sense of humour at the situation; but he contented himself by observing, in a very distinct voice, that he supposed the clock had run down again, and he must look at it to-morrow.

The striking had ceased: but Settler was charmed to obey the order to lie down opposite the dial, for he was sure in his own mind that some fun was coming. Meanwhile, the hunter went below, made his coffee, filled his tray, and brought up their supper, as he had the previous evening; lighted a small fire in the dining-room, and a couple of candles, and finally produced a revolver, which he carried in his left hand, while he held a key in his right.

"Now, Settler, we'll just see what's the matter here, before we sit down to supper."

He unlocked the case, and the dog made one bound into it. A cry and a scuffle followed, and in another minute Martin had seized the collar of a man whom Settler had got by the leg. Between

them the fellow was soon on the floor of the hall. Where, instead of offering resistance, he began to implore mercy in such piteous tones that Martin's hand involuntarily relaxed. Calling off the dog, he quietly uncocked his revolver.

"You had better get up, Medland," he said. "If you are sober, I will hear you presently."

"Sober? What have I had for the last four-and-twenty hours inside my lips, sir? Nothing. And I'm that starved with cold, too, I've caught my death, I do believe. Oh, sir, if you'd left me there another night it would just have been a murder at your door. I couldn't have lived through it—no, I couldn't."

"Then I've saved your life, it seems?" said Martin, as he coolly locked the clock-case.

"I don't deny it, sir—you have: and thankful I am to you for that same. Only I'm that sick and faint I don't know how to say what I mean, and if so be your honour would spare me a mouthful of brandy——"

"I have none—I never use it. Come in here."

He led the way into the dining-room, gave his unbidden guest a chair, and poured him out a steaming cup of coffee. The trembling creature swallowed some of it in haste, and then devoured the bread and meat set before him with an avidity that convinced Erasmus his tale was so far true, that he had been a long time without food. His appearance, never attractive at the best, was now wretched in the extreme, from his clothes, face, and hands being grimed with dust and dirt, and his hair all one tangled dust-heap. Settler, having been instructed that his person was protected by the laws of hospitality, contented himself with occasionally giving him a contemptuous sniff, and refusing all overtures at conciliation. His master might choose to tolerate such company, for reasons of his own—but no dog of the world would be drawn into acknowledging his acquaintance.

Whatever Martin's reasons were, his method of treatment had a marked effect on his prisoner; as the meal went on, and his strength and senses came back, young Medland, for it was that individual, involuntarily dropped the whine, and ceased the protestations, with which he had tried to defend himself at first. He became more silent; and looked sincerely ashamed when Martin calmly asked him how he felt now.

"Well, sir, I must say I feel uncommon small."

"You had need be small, if you play such tricks often."

"Meaning the clock, sir? Ah, there's more room behind there than you'd suppose. I could tell you something about it that would surprise you, sir."

"You had better keep all that for the magistrate."

"The magistrate! Dear sir, you never mean to say you'd give me into custody, after I've sat at your table, and eaten of your bread? Why, sir, the very savages wouldn't do such a thing."

"You go and get caught prying into one of our nigger camps, and just see what they will do to you."

"I know, I know, sir, I deserve no favour; and if you had kicked me out at the door, I couldn't have blamed you; but as you didn't do it then, I can't think you'll be hard on me now."

"To be sure, it was a pity I didn't, but anyone may make a mistake; and if it will ease your mind ——"

"Don't laugh at me, sir, unless you mean to make me laugh too. I could almost laugh to find myself sitting here, so pleasant, along with a gentleman, after the miserable time I've had of it, in the cold and the dark. Oh, sir, if only you'd overlook it this time, you shall never repent being good to me. I'll make you amends; I'll serve you faithful—I'd like nothing better than to be on your side, if you'd give me a trial."

"What do you mean? I am a servant myself."

"I know, sir, and there's upper and lower servants in many houses, and if you'd take me under you, I could be useful—I could, indeed. I've been thinking a deal about my past life when I thought I might be starved to death and nobody know it; and I see I've no chance of doing better if I'm left to myself—I want a master who'll hold me tight, and not let me have a drop, though I beg for it on my knees—and you're the first man I ever saw that I'd like to call my master. I know you hold good cards, and I never do."

Martin leaned his elbow on his knee, and his chin on his hand, looking the speaker steadily in the face.

"What put *that* into your head?"

"Can't say, sir, but I'm sure of it. And I should like to be on your side, and back your luck. I know a thing or two, sir, that you'd be glad to know too, and perhaps not care that all the world should hear of it: and you'll find I can be a good servant, if you'll only keep that revolver between me and the drink. This coffee of yours is worth it all."

"So you say now—but to-morrow I shall have you slinking out, when my back is turned for a moment, and getting it on the sly, and then expecting me to look after you."

"Sir, if you'll give me a trial, I'll never stir out without your leave. You may lock me in, if you like, when you go out yourself. Don't refuse me, sir; it seems to me to-night that I've got a chance, and it sha'n't be my fault if you are ever sorry you gave it me."

The man's voice and manner were so strangely earnest, that Martin began to consider the matter. If, as seemed probable, he really knew some of the mysteries of the house, his assistance would be valuable, and his secrecy might be secured by giving him an interest in the matter. It was a new sensation, moreover, to be approached as a master in this suppliant guise; and the imploring petition, to be saved from himself, moved the young man the more from what he had learned in St. Edmund's district. It was the wail that David

Forrest had often told him of, as ringing in his own ears ; though he confessed it was only one here and there who would consent to be rescued, in spite of their misery. This fellow might be acting a part, but he did not think he was. Anyhow, to utilise him would be more agreeable, perhaps less hazardous, than giving him up to the police : and, if he turned out treacherous, well, there were resources at hand for paying his wages. One thing had first to be inquired about—were his parents aware of his being concealed in the house ? Yes, was the answer, they had encouraged him to do it, hoping to give the new tenant a fright. It was not the first time he had done it, but he had never been caught before.

"Now look here, and mind you tell me the truth. Had you any hand in frightening that poor young lady ?"

"No, indeed, sir. I have a notion that I know who was concerned in that, but it was no doing of mine."

"Will you help me, like a man, to find out all about it, and prevent its happening again ?"

"I will try, sir—and I think I can do it."

"Then I will try you, on one condition : that you do not spoil my cards by showing them to anyone. Do you hear ?"

"I understand you, sir. I am dumb."

"If I do you a good turn now, you'll do me another when you can ; and if I have a run of luck, you shall share it. But the first time you fall back into your old ways, remember I have not the patience of the lady at Highlevels—I shall not try you again."

"I shall remember, sir. You see I am one of those who can't abide to be under a woman. When they tell me one thing, I always want to do another ; but your face is that of a master, and I feel the luck is on your side. You'll want it all before you've done."

CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE FIRE.

IT seemed very long to Alice Kerr, even in the midst of her interesting work, since she had parted with her friends ; especially as she had been disappointed in not hearing from Edith. She herself had written every day, keeping a complete journal of her doings and experiences, pouring out her sentiments on every subject but one, in full reliance on the indulgence of the reader ; but with the exception of one short, encouraging note, there had not been the response she craved. Grace, too, had received no answer to her last letter to Lucy ; and instead of growing strong in the country air, she was looking so ill that kind Mrs. Salisbury, laying it all to London smoke, was putting her through a course of new-laid eggs and clotted cream, assisted by drives in the little pony-carriage, to nourish, as she

said, the poor starved lungs. On one of these occasions she took her to Longmorton, the small market-town where the station was; and, as she usually did, inquired for letters at the post-office. They had no second post in the village, but could sometimes forestall the next day's intelligence by an expedition of this kind. As it happened, there were letters both for Miss Kerr and Grace Pyne, and good Mrs. Salisbury's satisfaction in handing the welcome despatch to her humble companion was all the greater for the absence of "Miss" before Grace's name.

"There, my good girl, I hope that will cheer you up. Read and enjoy it, for I do not want to talk; I have enough to think of, besides attending to the pony."

She took care not to look that way for the next mile or so, that the hands, whose trembling the rustle of the paper betrayed, might have time to grow more steady. The shy, quiet Londoner, with her neat, sober dress and industrious fingers, had made great progress in Mrs. Salisbury's esteem; her reticence contrasting favourably with the ready tongues of her village acquaintance. It was so seldom that Grace Pyne's voice was heard, except in answer to a question, that it was rather a surprise when she suddenly begged to ask if they should be passing anywhere near Lowlevels.

"Yes, within an easy walk across the fields. Do you wish to call there?"

"If it would not be giving you too much trouble, ma'am—if I might be set down, I could walk up, after I had spoken to Mr. Martin."

"You want to see Mr. Martin? We will go up to the house, then. I should like to speak to him myself."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Grace, pressing her hands nervously together on her lap, and looking so steadfastly at the distance before her, that Mrs. Salisbury quite enjoyed the thought of the treat she was giving her in that view of the moor.

The pony, however, to whom scenery was a secondary object compared with his own stable, no sooner found his nose in a direction that promised a longer road than he intended, than he began to behave as ladies' pets usually do. When, between weak chastisement and fervent coaxing, he was induced to acquiesce, he did it under so much protest, that his mistress really had enough to absorb all her attention in bringing him to the gate of Lowlevels. When she could extend her notice beyond his refractory ears, she became aware of an unexpected apparition—that of young Medland, looking surprisingly clean and tidy, and handling a loaded wheelbarrow as if he had been used to work all his life: which he certainly never had been to her knowledge. At the sight of the pony-carriage he ran with officious alacrity to open the gate and admit them into the drive.

"Who would have thought of seeing you here?" was Mrs. Salisbury's uncomplimentary remark, as he touched his cap. "I

heard your parents were very angry with Mr. Martin because they had not been kept on."

"So they was, ma'am; but Mr. Martin has been good enough to take me on trial. I hope to do better, please ma'am, now I have made a beginning."

"If you *have* made a beginning, I hope so too, but it strikes me I have heard you say so before. You should have let me know you were in service; I expected you yesterday to sweep the walks."

"I am sure, ma'am, if it will oblige you, I don't mind asking my master to let me run up to-morrow and do it."

"Oblige me! Nonsense. You are not the only man in the world who can handle a broom. I should like to know what induced Mr. Martin to engage you without a character."

"The hope of giving me one, ma'am."

"Oh, indeed! You seem to have your answers wonderfully ready: but that you always had. I wish I could see some good done, as well as talked about."

"Please, ma'am, here comes my master: he will tell you himself if he has any fault to find. He knows I have not tasted a drop of anything stronger than coffee since I have been in the house, and I feel so much happier, ma'am, that I've no temptation to run after any."

"I am glad to hear it," was the reply, and as Martin came forward to receive his visitors, they alighted from the carriage.

"You have not been round to Highlevels, as you promised, sir," she said, in that winning manner he had found so pleasant before, "and my granddaughter is quite disappointed. Your good-nature has never been forgotten, by her or me."

Martin bowed, and murmured something about being busy.

"You are making alterations, I suppose? May I go round the rooms, and look at them? I have not been in this house for a long while, and should be glad to refresh my memory."

It was not merely from kindness to Grace that she said this; she really had some curiosity to see the rooms again; and, declining his attendance, she left them to entertain each other. Martin, observing that Grace was almost too agitated to speak, took her into the dining-room and gave her a chair.

"Is anything wrong? Does Miss Kerr want me?"

"No, thank you. It's a letter I've had just now—from Lucy. Have you heard anything from Mr. Bruce?"

"No; I have been looking out for a letter for some days."

"Then you don't know that he is gone to Dover?"

"Dover! That was a sudden move. What made him leave so soon?"

"The fire, I suppose."

"What fire?"

"Some fire there has been in the Mission schoolyard," said Grace, flurried by his manner, and referring nervously to her letter.

"Any lives lost? Anyone hurt? Where was Joel Treherne?"

"He seems to have been there. I will read you what she says. It is dated from the 'Lord Warden,' Dover.

"My own dear Grace,—I suppose you know all about our move from Miss Kerr, and the fright we had with the fire in the Mission schoolyard, which I can't make out the rights of, nor Joel either, and there's been more going on than I like to talk about, as I am not sure. Now it is all over, I am very glad we are here. The doctor said Mr. Bruce must not stay in town any longer, and Mr. and Mrs. Carroll came to fetch him away, and Miss Leicester was kind enough to take me, instead of Mrs. Ellis, as her maid. Mr. Bruce was very ill at first, but he is getting much better. I think they mean to be married directly after Easter, and perhaps they will go abroad, before they settle down at Lowlevels. Dear Grace, she told me she hoped that you and me would be her housemaid and cook, which will make me quite happy, if you are so too. People make me laugh when they talk about you and Mr. Jones—I know better. Dear Grace, if only I could see you as happy as I am, with my dear, dear Joel, who is the best man in the world, and the handsomest, I should have nothing more to wish, except that there were no wicked people in the world. Joel says it was a near thing, but they got the worst of it this time."

"Is that all?" asked Martin, as the reader paused.

"All but a few words, only meant for me," said Grace, who had really read straight on out of sheer nervousness, when she had intended only to select a sentence or two.

"Who is the Mr. Jones she mentions?"

"He brought me news of a friend of mine."

"Where does he come from?"

"Australia."

"Is he himself a friend of yours?"

Grace was silent for a few moments, before answering, "Yes."

"Grace," he said, looking earnestly at her, as she sat with drooping head before him, "Joel has no secrets from me, so you and I ought to be friends. What am I to think? Is this man's name Jones, really? or is he ——"

"Stop, stop, sir—don't ask me what I cannot answer. He is a man who has been dreadfully tried, and unjustly accused, and he trusts me; and I must not, and will not, betray his secrets."

"Do you think he had any hand in this fire?"

"I hope and trust not. He is not a housebreaker, or a thief—that I am quite sure of."

He looked at her thoughtfully for awhile, then walked up and down the room in silence.

"Do you know what happened in this house?" he asked, presently, as he stopped short before her. "Do you know that a poor young wife was frightened to death by the secret contrivances of some

prowling villains who were never found out? I am doing my best to fathom that mystery, and if it is tried again, it will be at more risk than it was before. But I would have you know this—there is a man dogging us, who hates Gabriel Bruce; and I strongly suspect he has taken the name of Jones on one occasion, if not on more. If we mean the same person—do your best to warn him off; for if he persists in trying to injure my friend, there is neither mission, nor church, nor priest, nor prayer, that shall stand between him and me. He has escaped me twice since we came to England—let him take care how he crosses me the third time!”

“Oh, Mr. Martin—you don’t believe it is the same! You wouldn’t judge an innocent man unheard, because of the name?”

“No, I wouldn’t. But, Grace, if you are so sure of your friend’s innocence, will you help me with a proof? I told you what I thought about that attempt at Mr. Bruce’s door. Here is a witness.” He took the fur cap out of a box in a corner of the room. “I give that into your charge. Find out for yourself if it is his, or not—and according to what you find, judge him and me.”

She took the cap, but through her blinding tears she could hardly see what it was. Moved by her distress he began to say something about the possibility of a mistake, which gave her a momentary courage. “Oh, sir!” she said, clasping her hands, “you are a young gentleman, free and respected—I’ve heard you have lived a deal in the wilderness, like Abraham and Isaac, and so perhaps you don’t know so much about the bad ways of town, and how men are tempted, if they once go wrong, to get worse and worse. But if you had ever been yourself or seen one you cared for in the case of Ishmael—his hand against every man, and every man’s against him—and knew how dreadfully hard it was for him, so long as he was poor, to get a chance, or a hearing, or a good word, you would see there was some excuse even for the worst—and that anyone may be drawn into wickedness, if no hope is left him of ever doing better unless he first does something worse!”

Her tears choked her speech, and she did not see what a change had passed over Martin’s face as he listened. She had struck a chord of whose power she knew nothing, and he had to command himself before he could reply. When he did, it was to observe, with a sarcasm intended to conceal his own emotion, that she had betrayed her secret.

“It is for no friend’s messenger you are pleading like this. Whatever else he may be, he is the friend himself, Grace.”

“Then,” she said, bravely, standing up before him, “I have trusted you, sir, as I have not my own sister, nor yet Mr. Forrest; and I have put my life in your hands, Mr. Martin, but I know it is safe, for there never was a real gentleman yet as would turn a poor woman’s words against herself if she went to him in her trouble. See now, sir, you have a friend you love—and no wonder, for he is a noble

young gentleman, and he is well to do, and everybody speaks in his praise, and the dearest lady in the land is to marry him—but if you saw him on the brink of some awful danger that might ruin him body and soul, wouldn't you try all you could to save him? I'm sure you would. And I may be, after all, making a great mistake, but somehow it seems borne in upon me that the man I know and you will come together some dreadful day, and what will come of it, God, Who pities us all, only knows. Oh sir! if in that day, whenever it comes, you will think of my words—if you'll only remember that if it is a good thing to hinder a man from doing wrong, it is grander still to help him to do right—if you'll be merciful—as merciful as you can—I will pray God to bless you in all you do, and that you may never know what it is to have a name you love held up to scorn and shame!”

“Woman!” he said, stamping on the floor as if in agony, “what makes you speak to me like that? Do you suppose no one has ever had anything to bear but yourself? There, poor soul, I'll do what I can. Don't break your heart beforehand; we may both be mistaken—but this I promise you, at any rate—I'll not betray your confidence, if you will deal fairly with mine. If you will watch on your part, and do your best to keep your man from crossing us, I, on mine, will not go out of my way to look for him: aye, and if we do meet, as you fear, I'll give him a chance, supposing I have one to give. But I am no gentleman, Grace, remember, and nothing will ever make me one now.”

“Nothing will ever make you anything else while you behave as one,” said Grace, fervently; and as Mrs. Salisbury's step was heard approaching, she wiped her eyes, and hid the fur cap under her shawl. The lady was impatient to get home, so Martin had only to hand her into her pony-carriage, and bow his acknowledgment of the civility with which she renewed her invitation to come and see Myra, who was always wishing to see him again. If allowed, he would walk over the next day, to inquire what news Miss Kerr had received.

“Do so,” said Mrs. Salisbury, as she gathered up her reins. “And a word to the wise—take care how you trust your servant yonder, till you have given him a real trial.”

“I don't trust him at all,” said Martin.

He proved his words, for when he came to Highlevels the next morning he brought his satellite with him, as well as Settler, leaving them to wait for him outside. Orders had been given for his immediate introduction into the library, but he was so much earlier than had been expected, that Alice was still occupied, with Grace's assistance, in arranging her drawing-board and chair in the proper light for her sitter.

“Oh, is it you already, Mr. Martin? I am so glad to see you again! I want to know what you have heard, and to talk over what they tell me—it seems to have been the strangest affair, and poor

Grace, here, with her sister in the middle of it, is as anxious as anybody—no wonder. Do sit down, and tell us all you know."

"Perhaps you would like to read Mr. Bruce's letter, Miss Kerr? He says you will explain the beginning of it."

"Does he?" and Alice's cheeks flushed with delight, as she took the letter, and began to read aloud.

"Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, April.

"'Pends-toi, brave Crillon,' &c. Ask Miss Kerr to tell you the rest of the story, my dear Ironhand, and draw the moral for yourself."

She stopped to look at him with a smile. "Don't you know the story?"

"How should I? It is in some book, I suppose."

"It is told in the history of France that Henri IV. had a brave general, Crillon, and the king wrote to him after a battle that he had only to hang himself, as they had been fighting without him."

"I see. If hanging myself would make him safe I might be tempted to try. Can you tell me where that story is to be found, Miss Kerr?"

"I daresay I could find it for you among Miss Strahan's school books. I will ask Mrs. Salisbury presently."

"Thank you," said he, simply, as his eyes glanced at the well-filled shelves. "I wonder how long it would take to learn as much as you ladies know?"

"You would not be long in getting to the bottom of my learning, I assure you. One picks up a certain amount of names and dates and odd stories, in a scrambling way—but I do not really know anything."

He smiled—a rare, but pleasant smile, which illuminated his whole countenance.

"I was told the other day that to know we know nothing is a sign of wisdom."

"But I am not wise enough to say that, exactly. I know something about drawing. Do you?"

"Nothing whatever. I know a likeness when I see it."

"Then study Miss Strahan's while I read this letter, for she will be down in a few minutes, and the fire must not be mentioned in her hearing. Anything of the kind excites her too much."

"Poor child!" muttered he, as he turned to Alice's drawing-board, with the portrait in its half-finished stage—that bewitching period in water-colour drawing, when the imagination fills up what the brush has only suggested. It was already a remarkable likeness, and the strange effect of the old miserly keenness in the youthful face seemed to fascinate him strongly. As he stood musing over it, and the light which Alice had artistically arranged fell partly on his bent head, partly on the old armour and dark wood-carvings behind him, she could not help thinking what a picture he would make in himself.

Even Gabriel's letter was for the moment forgotten, while her quick fancy sketched out the design, and "the Squire's Vigil" rose before her complete. If she could but seize that expression, and represent him watching his armour, battered by gallant service, on the eve of the well-deserved accolade!—but the vision was dispelled by his looking round again, quietly remarking, "One would think you had lived among the gaming-tables. I never but once saw that look in a child's face, and then it was a boy."

"You must have seen many strange things, and people too, in your time," said Alice.

"Yes," he said, "I have : but nothing to what I meet with in books."

"What a curious sensation it must be, with everything quite fresh to read ! I rather envy you, Mr. Martin."

His good-humoured bow and smile suddenly reminded her that she was, perhaps, assuming too much intimacy, considering that he was Mr. Bruce's servant, and she hid her confusion by returning to the letter. Grace, in consideration for her personal anxiety, was permitted to know the contents, as she had been longing to do all the while, and by comparing the several parts of the correspondence together, a general idea of the facts became clear to all three.

Gabriel Bruce had retired early to rest ; and, finding Joel had not returned from his walk, had thrown himself, half-undressed, on his bed, and fallen asleep, leaving his window partly open—a habit of which Miss Thirza had tried to cure him in vain. From a troubled dream of camp life and forest wandering, and contending with a fire that was smothering him with smoke, he awoke to find the room filled with the smell of burning wood, and a man's hand laid on his chest. There was light enough still in the grate to show that he wore a fireman's helmet, though his features could hardly be distinguished ; and as Gabriel attempted to rise, and asked what was the matter, a deep, forced voice assured him it was all right—there was a fire, but he was not to be frightened—he and his mate would get him out by the window. The mate was looking in as he spoke, and the shouting in the street below confirmed his words. Gabriel thought directly of the others—and peremptorily desired that he might be left to take care of himself, while they ran to help the women and children.

"We must obey orders," was the only reply, and in a moment the blanket was flung round his person, and strapped down with a leather belt, so as to pinion his arms. It was done before the startled convalescent, whose pulse was still fluttering from his being so suddenly aroused, had time to think, or to utter a sound.

"Now then, Captain," hissed a voice in his ear, "no harm is meant you, and none will be done, if you are quiet ; but I want that trinket you wear round your neck, and I mean to have it this time."

He had a strong pair of pincers in his hand, and was fumbling at Bruce's throat ; but, to his evident exasperation, no chain was there. Unknown to anyone, Edith had implored him to trust her

with it while he was still so weak, and she was wearing it at that moment. An utterance of rage, almost like the snarl of a wild beast, burst from the robber's lips; and at the same instant came a shriek from outside—such as sent the blood surging in Bruce's veins, and almost gave him strength to break his bonds. It was Edith's voice, and in the agony of believing her to be in danger close by, he writhed himself from under the grasp of his enemy, and fell heavily on the floor. The second man had come to his comrade's assistance, but of what happened then Gabriel knew little. Some one burst in upon them all, and the whole room seemed filled with confusion.

Miss Leicester's evidence supplied the gap. She had been startled, while writing letters, by the sudden glare of light and smell of burning, and, of course, her first thought was of her invalid over the way. When she opened her window the ladder was standing at his, opposite, and at first the disguise of the men deceived her also, especially as, when Joel rushed up the street, the man on the look-out hailed him, and bade him hold the ladder, for they must bring the gentleman down. But fortunately her sight was remarkably keen, and she detected the struggle within the room, and her scream of warning to Joel quickly changed the aspect of affairs. The Cornishman charged up the ladder as if he had been leading a forlorn hope, and his right-and-left sledge-hammer blows sent one adversary out of the window he had just entered, and the other, after a short, but fierce struggle, flying down the stairs. For pursuit of either he had no time, as Gabriel's condition required all his care; the costume of the Fire Brigade proved their safeguard, and they escaped, with no severer punishment than his onset had inflicted—and the defeat of their manifest design. Joel believed that he must have done them some little damage; he remembered a crash or so, and giving one fellow's wrist a wrench that nearly twisted his hand off; but he could only conjecture who they were, and could not have sworn to either. The fire was got under in an hour or two, and its origin was a mystery still. What was of most immediate importance was the state of Mr. Bruce's health, which had compelled the party in Greville Gardens to take up their quarters with him at the Lord Warden; where the quiet and the sea air were reviving his strength. Further details were reserved for another opportunity, which, as Edith intimated, would not be long in occurring. They were quietly arranging their plans, and no scheme, however happy, would be perfect in which Alice was not included. There was a deep tone of happiness in the latter part of the letter, the thankfulness for the escape overpowering all the indignation at the attempt. Those who read of it at a distance, however, did not quite share the feeling—and Martin scanned every line to see if a word was said to point out the perpetrators of the deed. When he took his leave, he found his servitor outside the lodge, coolly smoking a cigar.

"Where did you get that?" he demanded, as Settler rose and fawned on him.

"A decent sort of man asked his way just now, and we had a chat on one thing and another, and he gave me a couple of these."

"What sort of man was he? You had better take care how you make friends with strangers on the high road, Medland."

"Of course, sir, but I'm all right there; I've a pretty good notion what his sort is—he let it out as we were talking. He's one of the London police, and has met with an accident on the line, for his hand was in a splinter. Would you try one of his cigars, sir? He seemed a very decent sort of man."

(To be continued.)



NIGHT AND MORNING.

OUT in the cold, the darkness, the despair,
Out on the desert waste, unloved, alone;
For thee no sun, no warm-encircling air;
For others, bread; for thee, poor child, a stone.

For others, all the glitter and the gold,
A pathway strewn with roses for their feet;
For thee, black night upon the dreary wold,
The bitter piercing wind, the driving sleet.

Storm-beaten lilies clinging round thy heart,
Dead flowers of Hope, which sprang in happier years,
While spectral forms of Memory round thee start,
And mock with hollow laughter at thy tears.

Bear up, sad heart, bear up a little while!
Has not the Master said it? He will come.
Soon shalt thou bask beneath thy Father's smile,
Safe in the shelter of thy Father's Home.

A pleading voice comes stealing up the vale,
The Valley of the Shadow, sweet its tone:
Be not afraid, my trembling child, nor quail;
Canst thou not watch one hour with me alone?

The night is now far spent, the day at hand,
The red dawn slowly creeps across the sea;
Soon shall thine eyes behold the Morning Land,
Full in the sunlight of the Life to be!

A sound of rustling wings, the East aglow:
"Good morning" greetings from an angel band:
Through gates flung open wide comes, sweet and low,
A strain of welcome from the Spirit Land.

ALEXANDER POPE.

IN the days when James II. was making vows to the saints every morning and breaking his coronation oath to his subjects every afternoon, there was in Lombard Street a large prosperous draper's shop. It was a place remarkable for drawing together around its door a vast number of chairs and coaches; a place outside which the unwashed many used to stand to stare at the rich brocade and velvet doublets of the polished perfumed few; a place uncomfortably connected in the minds of fathers and husbands with long bills; but a place that no imagination, however wild and extravagant, had dreamt of associating with poetry. Yet there a poet was born.

The year of the birth of the linendraper's son, Alexander Pope, was that of King James's abdication. The Popes were Roman Catholics, and many must have been the indignant lament breathed round the child's cradle over the King driven from his father's throne, over the fair young Queen flying through the chill night with the baby heir of ancient princes clasped to her breast, over the gorgeous robe of the priest eclipsed by the black gown of the parson. These household murmurs, and the animosity which was displayed at that time by the two great political parties that divided the land against each other, and which penetrated even into the calm of private life, may very likely first have given that turn for sharp controversy to the mind of the embryo poet which characterised it so strongly in after days.

The fortunes of Pope the father throve well on silk and velvet. No doubt there was a mental power in the family, which in the son worked its way to the surface in the higher form of poetical genius, but which in the father limited itself to making him a successful tradesman. At a comparatively early age, and while his boy was still very young, Mr. Pope had realised enough capital to enable him to give up the shop, to leave the noise and smoke of the metropolis, and to retire to a pretty little house, nine miles from Windsor, on the borders of the forest.

It was a quiet, shadowy place, full of the murmur of trees and whisper of grass, surrounded by the incense of wild flowers, and awakened at dawn by a chorus of birds. A fit home it was, in truth, for a young poet; and there, as might be expected, Pope's mind early grew to understand something of what was its appointed work in the world.

Fragile and sickly from his earliest years, the boy, when other lads of his age would have been climbing the trees, or running after the rabbits, or turning the oaks into giants with whom to fight, spent his time in wandering among the tall stems, book in hand, or lying in a waking dream, gazing up at the tremulous arch of green overhead.

At length, out of these long hours of solitude and self-communing, his mind gradually evolved the idea that it wanted to give expression to something which was hidden within it; and while still little more than a child, he wrote his first poetry.

Pope's education was first carried on by Bannister, a Roman Catholic priest, who breathed into him a strong affection for his father's form of faith, and grounded him well in Greek and Latin.

After a time he was sent to a school at Twyford, and there he had his first experience of mixing with and working among his fellows. He does not seem to have especially distinguished himself at school; perhaps his weak health kept him back. Nor does he appear to have made any very lasting school friendships; very likely his lonely life in the forest made him rather shy and unsociable with his companions. At school he made several short translations into English verse of classical authors, a fit apprenticeship for what he would have to do in after days.

On leaving Twyford he was very quickly launched into the middle of London life. That world in which the lad in his teens now found himself seems to us a strange world as we glance back at it with our modern eyes.

In the first place, there was the court. The chief person there was a woman with a small share of beauty, a small share of brains, and a small share of heart. But all these scanty proportions of good things made up a Queen, and therefore, in future years, young Alexander Pope was to style her "great Anne," in his verse.

Close by the throne there stood another woman, who ruled the Queen's mind a good deal more than the Queen did herself, whether the matter in hand were the choice of a dress or the signing of a death warrant. Everything about that lady was bright; her eyes were bright, and so were her complexion and her intellect, and yet there was one dark spot within, which would occasionally show itself outside plainly enough. She had a temper that would often make that fair face as black as night. She—the Duchess of Marlborough—was a stately court lady enough now, but there had been days (so it was whispered in high circles) when Sarah Jennings and her no less beautiful sister Frances had been fond of such pranks as going about the town dressed up as orange-girls. There, too, was Sarah's lord, the great Duke, the man of highest military genius and meanest avarice, the man who entertained princes, and haggled with costermongers about the price of a bundle of greens. Harley was among the throng, cool, cautious, impenetrable, biding his time, already perhaps forecasting what one day he was to be.

Some men at that court were men with double lives. Their bodies were in England doing homage to Queen Anne, their hearts and souls were far away with an exiled prince in a foreign land. There were other men there whose whole beings were aflame, burning for Protestantism and freedom.

Such was the aspect of the court.

Then there was the stage, which formed so conspicuous a feature in the London of that day, the reigning star of which had a larger court round him or her than Queen Anne herself; on which rivalry and jealousy rose so high that one actress carried a real dagger on to the boards to stab a personal enemy in a mimic struggle; the stage, with its open battle-field for genius, its sudden leaps to fame, its stormy sea of fickle public favour, where many a young aspiring hope went down. No doubt one of young Pope's first London experiences was going to a play.

The ladies intrigued about everything, from hearts to cards, and rustled in wide hoops to masquerades and routs, and were carried off now and then by ardent lovers, and were not displeased when they were. The young gallants swaggered through the streets with their rapiers at their sides, and were as ready for a duel as for dinner. The clergy dusted the costly volumes in their cosy libraries, and polished their sermons, but left the lives and consciences of their parishioners as black as they chose to make them.

No one dared set a foot a yard beyond the busier parts of the city after twilight. Highwaymen were nearly as plentiful as honest men; and though these robbers could be chivalrous at times, it was not exactly a pleasant thing to fall into their hands.

Every profession had its own coffee-house. There was the soldiers' coffee-house, and the attorneys', and the poets'; and of course it was young Alexander Pope's first ambition to be admitted to this latter.

By some fortunate chance he was, soon after he came to London, introduced to Dryden—"Glorious John!" We speak the words, and as we speak them the old shrunk figure in the black suit, with the gold snuff-box and the grand air, rises up before us. He was a true prince among the English poets of that day, however little our modern taste may confirm the lofty title.

Naturally enough, Dryden became for awhile the god of young Pope's idolatry. Corneille and Racine were the gods of Dryden's idolatry, and Corneille's and Racine's gods were the classical writers. Therefore Alexander Pope's first published poems were of course written in heroics after a strictly classical pattern. The heroics he clung to till the end of his life; but he soon learned to put into them true English manly sense and feeling, and to colour them with the especial hue of his own bright genius.

Pope's first appearance in print was made in some pastoral poems which were published when he was twenty-one. His next and more important work was the "*Essay on Criticism*." This latter was inspired by Boileau, who was always writing about the art of writing, but Pope made it his own by much keen thought and clear judgment. Its tone is, in spite of its theme, kindly in the main, and it has in it that line which is one of the most beautiful that he ever wrote—

To err is human, to forgive divine.

The "Essay on Criticism" was received with some favour by the reading public, and put its author at once on the list of living English poets.

Having thus firmly planted his foot on the first step of the ladder of fame, young Pope's next bounden duty as a poet was to fall in love. This he soon did thoroughly enough.

At Maple Durham, near Reading, there lived a Roman Catholic gentleman named Blount, with his two daughters, Theresa and Martha. The Popes became acquainted with them, and religious and political sympathies soon drew the two families closely together. The result of this intimacy was that Alexander Pope and the youngest Miss Blount fell in love with each other. Why this attachment never ripened into matrimony is the great mystery of Pope's life. Several points in his after-story show that the affection on his side must have been a very lasting and strong one. His name was never, as far as we know, connected as a lover with that of any other woman. The morning after his father died he wrote to Martha Blount that even at such a time as this he thought of her, and that surely this was the best proof of his love. At his own death he left her a considerable part of his fortune.

As for Martha, the poet's homage seems to have been very well received by her. Why, then, did no closer tie than that of friendship ever join those two lives? That is a question which can never be positively answered. The most likely solution of the riddle, however, seems to us to be that the extreme weakness of Pope's health, and the especial uncertainty of life caused by it, made him resolve never to marry. He loved Martha too well to make her either a constant nurse or a young widow, and so he contented himself with keeping her for a life-long friend.

But to return to Pope at twenty-one.

The success of the "Essay on Criticism" decided his part in life. From that time forward literature became his profession; but we suspect that for some years the money made in the draper's shop in Lombard Street materially helped in the young poet's housekeeping. His parents now left the old forest home, and came to live at Chiswick. No doubt they did this to be nearer their son, and probably some of his time was spent with them.

And now there rises up before us a scene with which the name of Alexander Pope (little as the actors in it dreamed of the fact) was to be connected for all time. In the drawing-room of a large London house sits a young lady. She has a pretty, piquante face, but the most striking of her charms is a profusion of fair hair, two or three ringlets of which, according to the fashion of the day, hang down her back. She is doing her best to be interested in a garden of silken flowers which she is creating on her embroidery frame. Every now and then, however, her rosy mouth is distorted by what is very like a suppressed yawn. Little wonder that she finds it dull. It is

a rainy afternoon, and she cannot go out; for as yet not even a foreshadowing of such a garment as a lady's waterproof has appeared in the land. She has no fancy for reading, because it is not a thing that is often done by a young gentlewoman, and this embroidery grows somewhat weary work, when one sits over it from breakfast to dinner and from dinner to supper.

By-and-by, a tall, well-built, manly figure comes down the street past the window. There is life enough in the young lady's eyes now, and her cheeks are redder than the silk in her work-basket. An instant after, a young man with a free, bold, joyous air is bowing over her hand. He sits down beside her, and a volley of lively talk begins between them. Compliments come from his lips as quickly as eggs from a conjurer's bag, but they wrangle a little too.

After a while the young gentleman's eyes begin to fix themselves more upon the lady's hair than upon her face, but she goes on chatting merrily and does not notice this. A pair of scissors are lying on her work-table; he takes them up and plays with them, as it seems to her, carelessly. He now almost imperceptibly slides his chair a little behind hers. The movement is so slight and gradual that she does not observe it. She is bending again over her work, picking out one or two false stitches, and is not looking at him. Talking all the while more busily than ever, and with sweeter words upon his lips than before, he raises the scissors which he still holds in his hand as if he meant to use them somewhere in good earnest, and as he does so a mischievous smile twinkles for a moment round his mouth. Do we see rightly? Yes; slowly, stealthily, the scissors are advancing towards a bright devoted lock, and an instant after, the prize is severed from the little head, and waves triumphantly in his grasp.

What words can tell the shrillness of her scream? What colours paint the wrath in her eyes?

He makes his way as quickly as he can out of the house, but next day he comes to try to make peace. There is no more peace, however, between Lord Petre and Arabella Fermor, or between the most petrified maiden aunts and distant country cousins on either side. The two families will never speak to each other again.

On this incident in real life Pope founded "*The Rape of the Lock*." Its mixture of delicate fairy work with common life—of good-humoured satire with that wholesome teaching which is embodied in *Clarissa's* speech—made the poem at once leap into public favour. It went rapidly through three editions. This may seem but a small success to our modern ideas, but it was a great one in that day. Pope's reputation as a poet rose very much with "*The Rape of the Lock*," and his literary brethren now began to glance at him with jealous eyes. From that time forward he seems throughout almost his whole life to have been at intervals engaged in a paper skirmish with one man of letters after another. The cause of this it is very

difficult exactly to define. Political differences may have had a great deal to do with it, for in those days Whigs and Tories hated each other with a most righteous hatred, which displayed itself in everything—in literature, in the street songs, in the very colours worn by the ladies. Perhaps, also, Pope's manner was characterised by something of self-conceit and arrogance. We can well believe that this latter was the case from what we gather from the tone of his writings.

Be this as it might, Pope was certainly no favourite among the other authors of the day. There was Ambrose Phillips, a man of moderate intellect, who wrote middling poetry, against whom Pope, on account of some personal dislike, hurled the sharpest darts of his satire. There were Addison and Steele, both of them too great in themselves and too kindly-natured to show any very fierce animosity against a man who was, they knew, a man of genius, but with whom, nevertheless, they always stood on the defensive. There was Tickell, Addison's friend and follower, who, like all disciples, was much more bitter than his master. There was Cibber, who imitated Pope's manner when he acted in the "Rehearsal." All these received their full dues for their shortcomings against Mr. Alexander Pope when he wrote the *Dunciad*.

Pope's next great work was his translation of the *Iliad*. It is the fashion in these days to run down this translation, but we question whether Homer will ever reach an English ear more musically than as interpreted by Pope. Cowper and Lord Derby are, it is true, more literal, but he gives the sense quite as fully as they do.

At about the same time that he translated the *Iliad*, Pope edited an edition of Shakespeare. Pope did not appreciate Shakespeare. Very likely he thought himself quite as great a poet as he was. But in those days no one in the slightest degree understood the author of "Hamlet," and it is therefore something to Pope's credit that, at a time when the highest treasure of national literature was neglected, he did a little to throw light upon it. The edition of Shakespeare paid Pope scantily, but the translation of the *Iliad* made his fortune. The first thing he did with his money was to buy a villa at Twickenham. There he established himself with old Mrs. Pope, who was now a widow. Nothing can be more harmonious and charming than the relationship which always existed between Pope and his mother: from boyhood to late on in middle age she was his most constant and sympathetic friend.

Pope employed himself in his new country home in a way which savours more of the cockney than of one brought up in the forest. From the villa to some ground which belonged to it on the other side of the road there ran an underground passage. This Pope delighted in turning into a spacious grotto, which he filled with all kinds of wonderful toys. There were piles of mimic rocks, from which trickled threads of water that called themselves fountains:

there were winding labyrinths which ended in nothing; there were secret niches with damp seats in them on which no one could rest. All these things were the joy of Pope's heart; but probably they were not by any means the joy of those friends who laid up for themselves large stores of cold and rheumatism as, compelled by stern civility, they wandered with the poet through his chosen bower.

Pope's Twickenham villa, which was shown to the public for a long while after his death, is not now standing, but we know it well through description, and bright, calm pictures of his life rise up before us. There was the window at which he sat writing, while the heavy barges, or pleasure boats, with their many-tinted freights of gaily-dressed ladies, glided past, up and down the shining river. There was the pretty garden where he walked to and fro in the summer moonlight, and thought, perhaps, with a sigh of Martha Blount, and of what might have been. There was the comfortable parlour (parlour was the generic word for a sitting-room in those days) where in the winter firelight he and his mother sat talking of the town gossip which the old lady had picked up during the day, as she toddled from neighbour to neighbour.

The first thing Pope was busy with in literature in his country house was the translation of the *Odyssey*. Now, there exists a popular belief, which is current even among well-read people, that this translation was the work of Pope's brain and hand alone; but the truth is that two other men, Broome and Fenton, were associated with him in it. The knack of writing heroic lines which run smoothly enough is not a very difficult one to acquire, if a man has a cultivated taste and an ear for musical rhyme. Broome and Fenton were educated men with a certain talent for verse making, and thus they managed to do their work so well that, when it had been touched here and there by the magic wand of Pope's genius, it passed for his.

The translation of the *Odyssey* paid yet better than that of the *Iliad*. The classics were then the fashion, and an English version of a great classic thus tunefully rendered could not fail in those days to sell well. Poor Broome and Fenton, however, got but small shares of the spoil. Love of money was one of the worst faults in Pope's character; and the niggardly way in which he rewarded the two men who had been the faithful helpers of his labour must always be a stain upon his name.

In the latter part of Pope's life he was surrounded much by the vague scepticism which in the eighteenth century came over from France to England. He did his best to contend against it by writing the "*Essay on Man*."

Pope lived to old age, and kept his position in the estimation of his intellectual countrymen till the last. In our days his poetry has gone out of fashion, but not the less for that will the name of Alexander Pope be a name for English men and women in all time.

ALICE KING.

LADY CARMEL'S GARDEN PARTY.

"IT will be a lovely afternoon," observed Rose Leslie to her sister Mabel, as they stood looking out of the window of their pretty drawing-room in Queen Street, Mayfair; "not a chance of rain. I hope mamma will be able to take us."

"I think she will," said Mabel. "Her headache was better after breakfast, and a drive in the open carriage will do her good. Besides, I know she is anxious to go; for this is the second time the Caramels have asked us, and it will seem so strange if we always refuse. Not that I imagine it will be very amusing. Those crushes seldom are."

"It will give us a breath of country air, at all events," said Rose; "and be a change from that eternal Row and the ices at Gunter's."

"We shan't escape Gunter, whether we go or stay," laughingly retorted Mabel. "And if we come across nothing worse than his pine-apple creams, we shall do very well. Provided that horrid Laura Lynx isn't there to listen to every word one says."

"And provided other people are, which is more to the purpose," slily remarked Rose.

"Who knows, Mabel dear, but one of us may meet her fate this afternoon!"

"Speak for yourself, Rose," said her sister; "but please don't use that abominable country-house phrase; it sounds like going to the scaffold, and I don't suppose marriage is as bad as that. Even if it is, we are not likely to be among the victims, unless ——"

"Unless two gentlemen, who shall be nameless," suggested Rose, "make up their minds that nice-looking girls—and we are *that*—though they *have* only five thousand pounds apiece, are more to their taste than Lucy Caramel with ten thousand, or that odious Priscilla Jenkinson with twenty. Well, *qui vivra verra*, and perhaps sooner than we think. If Lionel were not so dreadfully shy!"

"And Augustus so deplorably jealous!" sighed Mabel. "What is it, Jane?"

"Please, miss," answered the handmaid, whose entrance had interrupted the conversation, "the barouche is ordered at three, and your mamma says you have only just time to dress."

While they are preparing for their excursion, a few words respecting the social position of the young ladies whose confidential chat we have somewhat unwarrantably been listening to, will not be out of place. They were the daughters of General Leslie, at whose death, some two or three years back, their mother had taken and furnished the house in Queen Street, for the purpose of introducing Mabel and Rose into society. Their brother Edward, who had followed his

father's profession, and to whose share the greater part of the paternal inheritance had naturally fallen, was quartered with his regiment at Aldershot, and having apartments of his own in Jermyn Street, in no wise interfered with the domestic arrangements of the family. Mrs. Leslie, although occasionally an invalid, was an indefatigable chaperon, gave nice little dinners, and, being as particular in the choice of her guests as her chef was in the composition of his menus, succeeded in assembling round her table a select circle of intimates, including some of the best and most agreeable people in town. To many of these her really charming daughters were doubtless the chief magnets of attraction: both were extremely pretty, though in totally different styles; Mabel, the eldest, being as decided a brunette as her sister was undeniably blonde. Each had her admirers, some captivated by the aristocratic beauty of Mabel, others by the graceful piquancy of the blue-eyed Rose; but their assiduities were mainly confined to those harmless attentions which mean nothing, and which every good-looking girl who dresses and dances well has an indisputable right to command.

There were, however, two exceptions to the general rule, whose pretensions, though not so exactly defined as might have been wished, it would be doing them an injustice to confound with those entertained by the ordinary run of waltz-seekers and cloak-fetchers; and these were the Honourable Augustus Carlton, eldest son of Lord Harbury, and Captain Lionel Tremayne, of the Rifle Brigade. The first-named being in all respects an excellent *parti*, was naturally a great card in the eyes of mothers with marriageable daughters, by many of whom, indeed, he was already regarded as their especial property, notwithstanding what they persisted in terming his inconceivable flirtation with Mabel Leslie; for it was an undoubted fact that during the entire season he had not only been a constant visitor in Queen Street, but had on all possible occasions shown himself so exclusively devoted to the young lady in question, that, setting aside the rival aspirants and their mammas, professedly incredulous to the last, the usual hymeneal announcement in the *Morning Post* would have surprised nobody. Unfortunately, as before hinted by Mabel, such was his innate jealousy of disposition that, in spite of the utmost circumspection on her part, their mutual attachment was perpetually embittered by trifling disputes originating in his absurd fears and fancies, never of long duration, it is true, but still sufficiently frequent to retard—if not altogether prevent—any formal declaration of his intentions.

Of Captain Tremayne, the nephew and presumptive heir of a wealthy Cornish squire, and Carlton's intimate friend, all we need say is that he was a gallant soldier, thoroughly devoted to Rosie, but so painfully timid in her presence that although she was perfectly aware that he loved her—a feeling which she sincerely reciprocated—he had never as yet been able to summon up courage to tell her so; and the position of our heroines vis-à-vis their sweethearts having been thus

explained, we may conscientiously shift the scene to "The Cedars," Lady Caramel's pleasantly situated villa at Roehampton.

Sir Marmaduke Caramel, the representative at the period to which we allude of one of the oldest baronetcies in England, possessed, beyond his title and a fair average rent-roll, no personal characteristic worthy of particular mention, being a fussy, insignificant little man, a mere cipher in the establishment presided over by his wife, and graced by the somewhat mature attractions of his two daughters, Honoria and Lucy. His sole redeeming quality, indeed, was the antiquity of his family tree; but as this prestige, backed up by the incontestably blue blood of Milady, niece of the Earl of Mount Snowdon, amply sufficed, in the eyes of the world, to atone for all minor deficiencies, the owner of "The Cedars" and No. 99, Grosvenor Square, could very well afford to follow the example of King Louis Philippe, "*qui régnait, mais ne gouvernait pas.*" He had the less reason to complain of his own nonentity, the direction of the ménage being in excellent hands; Lady Caramel, besides exercising a careful supervision over the financial department, having succeeded, by dint of tact and perseverance, in rendering her receptions in town and her garden parties at the villa excessively *recherchées*, and accessible only to the cream of London society. The chief care of her life—for even she had her troubles—was an ardent and hitherto unfulfilled desire to see at least one of her daughters advantageously married; and this hope, as far as it concerned Miss Honoria, a gaunt and rather forbidding damsel of thirty-two, waxed fainter and fainter every year. There was still, however, a chance for her sister Lucy, who, though closely bordering on Balzac's favourite age for women, hardly looked more than five-and-twenty, a privilege she owed to a tolerably good complexion and a trimly proportioned figure; and the unconscious individual selected by maternal forethought as the future bridegroom was no other than the Honourable Augustus Carlton. That gentleman's devotion to Mabel was certainly a drawback, but then Guzman feared no obstacles, and why should Lady Caramel? So that when Miss Lucy innocently asked her mother on the morning of the fête what could have induced her to invite those Leslie girls, she was quietly reminded that if they didn't come, Augustus wouldn't, and that of two evils it was better to choose the least.

Four o'clock was on the point of striking when the first detachment of guests arrived at "The Cedars;" and from that moment an uninterrupted procession of carriages, passing in turn through the gates, deposited their occupants at the entrance door of the villa. The afternoon was sultry, and as few cared to remain longer in the house than was absolutely necessary, the spacious and admirably laid out gardens were soon thronged with visitors, the gay dresses of the ladies contrasting picturesquely with the sombre old trees to which the property owed its name. Refreshment tents had been erected in

a shady part of the grounds; near them a band of musicians had already commenced a series of anti-Wagnerian melodies, while the inevitable lawn tennis and croquet attracted to the smoothly-kept turf a few enthusiastic amateurs, undeterred by the scorching rays of the sun. The majority, however, of the company were scattered about in groups on the extensive lawn, admiring the magnificent display of flowers, Lady Caramel's peculiar pride and boast; and among these were Mrs. Leslie and her two daughters, beside the youngest of whom stood a tall, soldierlike man, stealing a glance at her every now and then, and nervously fingering his moustache when he imagined that anyone was watching him. Meanwhile, a rather pert-looking and very much over-dressed damsel, followed by an elderly lady, had joined the party; these were Miss Laura Lynx and her chaperon, Mrs. Mandeville. When the former had shaken hands with Mrs. Leslie, she took Mabel aside, and with a sly twinkle of her eye in the direction of Rosie's admirer, asked her in a whisper:

"When is it to be?"

"When is what to be?" was Mabel's counter-query.

"As if one were as blind as a bat, not to see how the land lies!" retorted Miss Lynx. "Well, I'm sure it is time he did speak out, unless he thinks it is Leap-year, and is waiting for Rose to begin. By-the-bye, Mabel dear," continued the young lady, with a malicious air of commiseration, "you must make up your mind to play second fiddle to day, for Lucy Caramel has managed to get the start of you, and seems inclined to keep Augustus Carlton all to herself. I am afraid he is an awful flirt, for they do say that he was in Mrs. Jenkinson's box at the opera on Saturday, and *very* attentive to Priscilla. I was so sorry, darling, when I heard it, you can't imagine, for I really thought ——"

What Miss Lynx thought was only known to herself, for having attained her object of making Mabel as uncomfortable as possible, she hastened to respond to an imaginary sign of her chaperon, and sailed away to perform a similar good office in some other quarter, precisely as the gentleman on whose enormities she had been expatiating, approached, apparently not in the brightest of humours.

"Where have you been hiding yourselves?" asked Mr. Carlton, advancing towards Mabel, and only just touching her proffered hand; "have you been alone all this time?"

"It is not so easy to be alone at a garden party," quietly replied Miss Leslie; "but, for my part, I have hardly spoken to a soul except Captain Tremayne and Laura Lynx."

"Atrocious little mischief-maker!" exclaimed the Honourable Augustus, with a look of intense disgust. "What has she been saying? Something spiteful, of course?"

"Nothing very agreeable, certainly," answered poor Mabel, biting her lips at the recollection of Priscilla Jenkinson and the opera box.

"She told me yesterday," abruptly broke out Mr. Carlton, "that Sweepstake had been seen talking to you in the Row."

Mabel laughed. "She was right for once; he did stop our carriage to tell us about Myra Lascelles, who has made, so bad a book for Goodwood, that whichever horse wins she is sure to lose."

"Was that all?" inquired her lover, evidently much relieved.

"Every syllable."

"Come this way, then," said Carlton. "I have something to say to you. Mrs. Leslie," he added in a louder tone, "I want to show Miss Mabel a wonderful specimen of the cactus, with a terribly unpronounceable name which I forget, but so perfectly hideous that our hostess is quite proud of it."

This ingenious manœuvre was, however, unexpectedly thwarted by the sudden appearance of the lady in question, accompanied by her youngest daughter, and a stiff, ungainly personage with a clove carnation in his button-hole.

"My dear Mrs. Leslie," said Lady Caramel, "I hope you are not fatiguing yourself. I am sure you must require some refreshment, and Mr. Wattles, who is most anxious to be introduced to you (here the stiff man bowed and blushed simultaneously) will be delighted to escort you to the tent. A protégé of Mrs. Lexington Huxtable, and enormously rich," she whispered to Mabel. "Mr. Carlton," she continued, turning to that gentleman, who was looking daggers at the unconscious Wattles, "do help Lucy to make up a party at croquet; no one understands these matters as well as you do."

There was no help for it; so Augustus, though with a very ill grace, reluctantly marched off with his smiling charge towards the croquet-ground, situated at the further extremity of the lawn; while her ladyship, having accomplished her project of separating the lovers, left Mr. Wattles to stay with his new acquaintances or not, just as he pleased, and returned to her post at the other end of the garden, where Honoria, during her absence, had been playing the part of chatelaine.

As for Captain Tremayne, any attempt to move him from Rosie's side would have been labour lost; but though he hemmed and hawed a good deal, and listened approvingly to his companion's lively sallies, he seemed as far from coming to the point as ever; and the young lady was beginning to find the tête-à-tête rather uphill work, when it was interrupted by a cheery voice exclaiming at her elbow,

"How d'ye do, Miss Rose? How are you, Tremayne?"

The speaker was the already mentioned Mr. Sweepstake, a prominent member of the Jockey Club, and a great favourite with ladies in general and with the Leslie family in particular. As he passed Tremayne he whispered in his ear, "I've done it at last, old man!"

"Done what?"

"Hush! Proposed to Priscilla Jenkinson, and been accepted, not half an hour ago."

"No!" ejaculated the Captain, staring at him with unfeigned admiration; then muttered to himself in an undertone: "How the deuce did he do it?"

"What are you two gentlemen whispering about so mysteriously?" asked Rose.

"That we never saw you look so charming," gallantly but untruly replied Sweepstake. "There can be but one opinion on that point, eh, Tremayne?"

"No doubt; yes, certainly, by all means," incoherently stammered the individual addressed; after which explosion, as if alarmed at his own temerity, he subsided at once into his normal state of placid torpor.

"Shall I tell you a good story, Miss Rose?" said Sweepstake, who appeared to be in an unusually talkative humour.

"Oh, do!" was her very natural reply.

"Well, then, you know Naseweis, of the German embassy?"

"Of course," she answered. "The best waltzer in London."

"First-rate hand at whist," murmured Tremayne.

"Described to a T," observed Miss Jenkinson's betrothed. "What do you think happened to him last night? He was asked to dine at old Lady Fitzmaurice's, and had accepted the invitation, when Gayford of the Blues sent him a reminder that he had already engaged himself to meet a lot of fellows at his club on the same evening. Naseweis wouldn't have missed Gayford's spread for all the old ladies in Christendom, but he couldn't positively throw over the Fitzmaurice, so how do you suppose he managed it? He went to Curzon Street at the appointed hour, took his hostess in to dinner, and made himself very agreeable while the soup was in progress. Just as they were handing round the fish, the butler brought him a note, which, after the usual apologies, he opened; appeared horror-struck at its contents, and rose from his chair, telling Lady Fitzmaurice that he was summoned to the bedside of an intimate friend, who was not expected to live through the night; and with many excuses for his unavoidable departure, left the room, and in another quarter of an hour was comfortably seated at Gayford's table."

"Very rude of him, in my opinion," observed Rose.

"And a very bad speculation, as it turned out," said Sweepstake; "for they sat down to whist after dinner, and the Herr Baron lost every rubber!"

As the narrator finished his anecdote, he caught a glimpse in the distance of the humming-bird which, with divers supplementary floral excrescences, decorated Miss Priscilla's hat, and hastily took his leave. Tremayne, who during the last five minutes had been fidgeting to and fro, suddenly turned to Rose, and said a few words which brought a flush into her pretty cheeks. What these words were it would be indiscreet to inquire, but the result was a protracted conversation in one of the secluded alleys of the garden, from whence

they emerged just as Mrs. Leslie, weary of listening to Mr. Wattles' platitudes, was wondering what had become of them. However, there they were, the young lady looking the picture of happiness, and her companion, contrary to his wont, in such remarkably buoyant spirits that Laura Lynx, who had sidled up to the group in the hope of fascinating Mrs. Lexington Huxtable's protégé, at once set him down as a victim to Lady Caramel's champagne. A whisper from Rose to her mother soon explained matters; and Mr. Wattles having opportunely yielded to Miss Lynx's advances, and been whisked away by that enterprising maiden, Mrs. Leslie proceeded to communicate the news to Mabel, who, with the patience of a martyr, had for the last half-hour been enduring the combined gallantries of old Lord Matlock with his ear-trumpet, and the no less prosy Sir Marmaduke Caramel.

At this juncture Tremayne, feeling himself *de trop* in the family conclave, started off in quest of his friend Augustus; and after sundry ineffectual researches finally discovered that gentleman seated in one of the refreshment tents, completely exhausted, and absorbing, with the zest of a man who had fairly earned it, his second tumbler of iced Badminton.

"Here you are, by Jove!" exclaimed the Captain. "I've been looking for you everywhere."

"Except in the right place," coolly replied Mr. Carlton. "Do you know what the thermometer stands at in the sun at this very moment?"

"Not I," replied Tremayne, considerably astonished at the question.

"Eighty-six. Nice temperature for lawn tennis, isn't it? Well, thanks to Miss Lucy Caramel and two equally insane individuals, such has been my enviable occupation since I saw you. That girl must be made of cast-iron—nothing else would stand it."

"I thought you were on the croquet-ground," said Tremayne.

"Incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim," groaned Augustus. "That's about my case. But you're not listening: what on earth is the matter with you?"

"I'll tell you what it is," burst out the Captain, unable any longer to contain himself; "I'm the happiest fellow in the world, that's all."

"Why, you don't mean to say you have proposed?"

Tremayne nodded.

"Wonders will never cease," philosophically remarked Carlton. "It was a thousand to a pony against it."

"Well," reflected his friend, "I don't think I ever should have done it, if Sweepstake hadn't set the example with Priscilla Jenkinson."

"*What!*" cried Augustus, seizing him excitedly by the arm.

"Are you sure of that?"

"He told me so himself."

"Idiot that I was to suppose—" muttered the other, "but it is not too late yet. Where's Mabel?"

"Just where you left her," answered Tremayne. "She was awfully bored by that button maker or whatever he is, until Laura Lynx spirited him away. I say, old fellow."

"Well?"

"Take my advice, and don't put it off another minute."

Carlton made no reply, but strode off at a rapid pace towards the spot where Mrs. Leslie and her daughters were still sitting. One look sufficed to enlighten Mabel as to the object of his coming; and before she could repress the tell-tale blush which overspread her features, she felt herself gently drawn aside, and the words which she had so ardently longed for were softly murmured in her ear.

The afternoon was fast drawing to a close, and many of the guests had already departed when Mrs. Leslie's carriage was announced. The landau of Mrs. Jenkinson had just driven from the door, closely followed by Mr. Sweepstake in his smart phaeton; while in sober jog-trot plodded along the hired brougham occupied by the much-enduring Mrs. Mandeville and Miss Laura Lynx. As our party took leave of Lady Caramel, a glance at Mabel's radiant countenance told the mistress of "The Cedars" that her labour had been lost, and that the long-coveted prey had escaped her; but she was a true woman of the world, bore the disappointment with Spartan impenetrability, and her farewell smile, even when directed towards the principal offenders, was cordiality itself.

One of the most reluctant to quit the festive scene was Mr. Wattles. As he prepared, with much inward trepidation (for he was an indifferent rider), to mount his horse, which had been impatiently pawing the gravel for the last half-hour, the parting words of his hostess sent him back to town in an ecstasy of bliss.

"I hope, Mr. Wattles, that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you in Grosvenor Square."

"Oh! mamma," said Lucy, when they were once more alone, "how could you ask that horrid man to call!"

"My dear Lucy," gravely replied Lady Caramel, "no man is horrid who has ten thousand a year. You forget that you were twenty-nine last birthday. On ne sait pas ce qui peut arriver!"

C. H.



THROUGH HOLLAND.

ABANDONING the neighbourhood of the Dead Cities and everything northward of Amsterdam, I determined one day to pursue my travels southward to Utrecht and thence upwards again into Friesland. Having seen something of one side of the Zuyder Zee, its desolate banks and quaint towns, I wished to gain experience of the other. The ancient city of Utrecht, famous for its bygone records, both warlike and ecclesiastical, its cathedral, its manufactories of velvet, which finds its way into so many drawing-rooms at home and abroad, bore some attractions for A. also. He quickly made up his mind to accompany me so far on my way, and then return to his beloved museums, pencils, and palette, whilst I pursued my solitary road in search of fresh fields and pastures new.

We started in good time one morning, and the distance between the towns was soon accomplished. No journey is very long in Holland. To go from London to Liverpool or Edinburgh is, even in these days, more or less of an undertaking: you feel at least that you have a journey before you. But this is a sensation you can scarcely realise in Holland, wherever rails are laid down. The distances are so comparatively short that you may describe the whole circle comprising the chief cities of the Netherlands, and return to your starting-point comfortably and leisurely, in the broad hours of the day.

The scenery on the road between Amsterdam and Utrecht was so much like the rest of the scenery in Holland that it need not be described. The reader by this time must be familiar with its main points. And yet, in truth, it was a degree more diversified; and towards Utrecht the country became somewhat undulating. This was sufficient variety to create diversion; rare enough to cause wonder, if not alarm.

In visiting Utrecht, or in writing thereupon, it is impossible to forget that here the first Christian church was established. In those early days it was the scene of religious struggles, just as, nearly a thousand years later, Holland was a prey to the Spaniard's lust of power. These recollections surround Utrecht with a halo, the more interesting than the events of the sixteenth century, that they gain all the subtle mystery that envelops a far-gone period of time: that vague feeling with which fourscore years looks back upon the days of its first youth, as a thing that could never, yet must, have been: all the romance and fervour which surround the history of the early martyrs.

In those times (not the very earliest of this dispensation), Utrecht

belonged to Friesland, a distinct province whose brave people, the Frisians, were first cousins to our own ancestors, the Anglo-Saxons. The country of the Netherlands in the early centuries was a prey to many races: the Franks, the Vandals, the Saxons, the Frisians, and others. The Frisians were finally conquered by Charlemagne, and then it was that they endeavoured to Christianize these pagans. Dagobert, son of Clotaire II., advanced against them as far as the Weser, took possession of Utrecht, and founded there the first Christian church. Still there was continual opposition, until Charles Martel, in the eighth century, fought a great battle, and finally caused them to accept Christianity. The Anglo-Saxons from Britain had much to do with their conversion, and the first Bishop of Utrecht, Willibrod, was an Anglo-Saxon. He abolished idolatry and founded the churches of North Holland. Winfrid, or Bonifacius, was another of the early Anglo-Saxon Christians who laboured amongst the Frisians, though more especially in Upper and Lower Germany, and finally endured martyrdom. Charles Martel gave to Willibrod extensive domains about Utrecht, and great wealth; and for many centuries the Bishops of Utrecht and the Counts of Holland held sway over the whole country.

Centuries after, Utrecht had to take her part in the Spanish Invasion, though she was spared many of its immediate horrors. It was here that the Phantom Battle was said to have been seen, of which various records are preserved, and the following is given by Motley:—

“Early in February, five soldiers of the burgher guard at Utrecht, being on their midnight watch, beheld in the sky above them the representation of a furious battle. The sky was extremely dark, except directly over their heads, where, for a space equal in extent to the length of the city, and in breadth to that of an ordinary chamber, two armies, in battle array, were seen advancing on each other. The one moved rapidly up from the north-west, with banners waving, spears flashing, trumpets sounding, accompanied by heavy artillery, and by squadrons of cavalry. The other came slowly forward from the south-east, as if from an entrenched camp, to encounter their assailants. There was a fierce action for a few moments; the shouts of combatants, the heavy discharge of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the tramp of heavy-armed foot soldiers, the rush of cavalry, being distinctly heard. The firmament trembled with the shock of the contending hosts, and was lurid with the rapid discharge of their artillery. After a short, fierce engagement, the north-western army was beaten back in disorder, but rallied again after a breathing time, formed again into solid column, and again advanced. Their foes, arrayed, as the witnesses affirmed, in a square and closely serried grove of spears and muskets, again awaited the attack. Once more the aerial cohorts closed upon each other, all the signs and sounds of a desperate encounter being distinctly recognised by the eager

witnesses. The struggle seemed but short. The lances of the south-eastern army seemed to snap 'like hempstalks,' while their firm columns all went down together in a mass, beneath the onset of their enemies. The overthrow was complete—victors and vanquished had faded, the clear blue space, surrounded by black clouds, was empty, when suddenly its whole extent, where the conflict had so lately raged, was streaked with blood, flowing athwart the sky in broad crimson streams; nor was it till the five witnesses had fully watched and pondered over these portents that the vision entirely vanished."

The depositions of the five witnesses were taken on oath separately before the magistrates, and the vision was considered typical of the impending battle between Count Louis and the Spaniards; which in reality ended in the total defeat and death of the former, or south-eastern army, under circumstances, as usual, of the greatest horror and massacre. Thus confirming the superstitious ideas of the people.

Then, in 1579, came the Treaty of Utrecht and the Union of the States, effected by Prince William of Orange, which was the foundation of the Dutch Republic; wherein all the provinces agreed on a close union for the purposes of safety, whilst each retained its entire and separate freedom, privileges, and laws. Thus we see what an important part Utrecht has played in the history of the Netherlands, and how, for reasons both past and present, it is a town that cannot remain unvisited.

Into this town we bent our steps one fine morning, and I felt at once its influence. You cannot be long in Utrecht without discovering that you are in a new element. It is different from any other town in Holland. In Amsterdam you have all the hurry of commerce; of men jostling each other in order to grow rich; that race for wealth that has become so fierce a battle and so perpetual a motion. Rotterdam is equally commercial, but here the shipping element more loudly declares itself, and throws over its bustle and work a charm very nearly allied to the romantic: the freedom of the broad ocean, the good-natured carelessness of those who go down to her in ships influence her very atmosphere. The Hague possesses fashion and pleasure to its heart's content: vulgar commerce must not run a race beside its dashing equipages and fair occupants. The *tone* of society is here, though much less observable than in Mayfair and the new Boulevards of Paris: that wonderful tone which will not allow its votaries to be natural, and is only to be described by the odious word artificial: assumed as much as the paint and padding which compose those brilliant complexions and Venus-like figures. Leyden, in spite of a past history of absorbing interest, is dull in this its day. You almost feel that its atmosphere has become impregnated with some of the dryness of its University tomes; lifeless and stagnant as the numberless stuffed birds, beasts, and fishes contained in its extensive museum. Haarlem—dear Haarlem—lives

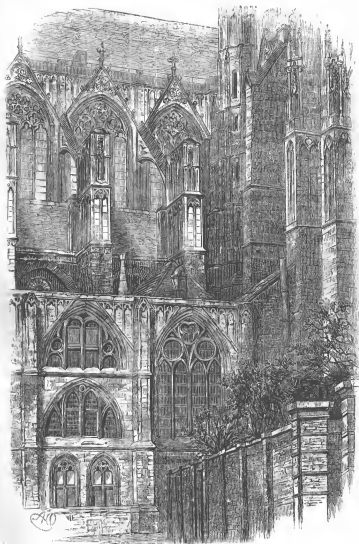
in its past ; its town-hall and wonderful old room, its cathedral, and sense-touching organ. You wander about its streets in a dream of bygone days, and there is no unusual noise or confusion rudely to awaken you. Hand in hand you walk with ghostly phantoms, and go through the horrors and excitement of that terrible siege as vividly as if three hundred years had not rolled on since then and passed into the eternal records.

But Utrecht is apart from one and all these characteristics. There is no element of commerce about its streets ; royalty throws no refined flavour into the air ; it has simply and peculiarly, the calm, grave, sedate dignity of a cathedral town. It knows how to respect itself, and how to make itself by the world respected—though the one fact, you will say, is a natural consequence of the other. Those heavy and alarming cameons, which thunder through Rotterdam and its sister city like heavy pieces of artillery, would set on edge the teeth of Utrecht. There is nothing to annoy you, or to grate upon you. Its streets are quiet, wonderfully clean, well-built ; it has groves of trees which are called boulevards, and form pleasant walks in summer. It has a mint where all the money is coined that passes into the pockets and stocking-toes of this thrifty people, and travels even as far as the Dutch East Indian possessions. It has a royal observatory where the sage old astronomers can keep sympathetic watch with the lovers in those shady groves of the Mal : only another proof how closely allied are the sublime and the ridiculous. The Mal, or Maliebaan, is an avenue of lime trees, three rows deep on either side, and more than half a mile in length. Imagine, my dear Virginia, the delicious scent and shade those limes must give forth as you tread the avenues with your beloved Paul, not arm-in-arm, but arms and hands more cunningly disposed. What Romeos and Juliettes have sighed out their vows to the sweet music of these rustling leaves, though with a happier termination, let us hope, than befell those two we all know of.

And it is time, I bethink me, to terminate this theme. I see before me a dignitary of the Church bristling with righteous horror, and asking me how I dare intrude such thoughts upon the sanctity of a cathedral city. Alas and alack, my dear bishop, is not human nature akin in its one touch ? You protest ? But did you not, perchance, in youthful days of ardour and passion, wander with some sweet Eve amidst these groves, your arm encircling her bewitching waist, and murmuring soft follies into her ear ? Have you had no experience of “ moonlight roving in the fragrant glades ” ? Quick, there ! a leech to reduce the purple in my lord bishop’s countenance. We have struck a right chord ; its vibrations loudly betray themselves. Let us pass on to the University, which is an important one and numbers about five hundred students, many of them of the upper classes of Dutch society.

All this I felt and saw as we wandered through the quiet streets.

We had been recommended to the Hotel des Pays Bas, and found it everything that could be desired for comfort, quiet, cleanliness,



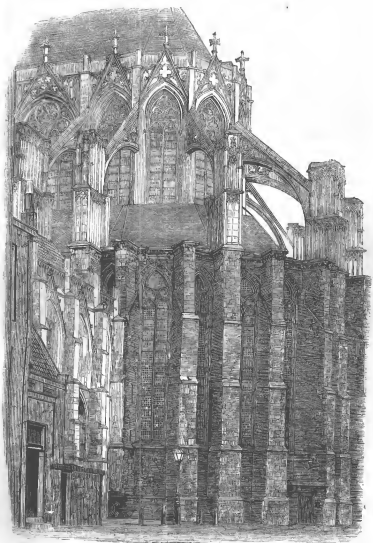
CATHEDRAL, UTRECHT.

and the polite attentions of its host. When I had satisfactorily settled my room and obtained foothold in the place, our wanderings commenced. They were taken in company with a guide; an

immensely tall, cadaverous, bilious-looking individual, who was quite paternal in his manners, and drew out for the benefit of his fellow townsmen all sorts of impossible fees upon every possible occasion. Beware of these guides, ye who visit Holland; or, at least, do not accuse me of neglecting to warn you. Be as generous as you please; you cannot be too much so, as a rule, through life; but our whole being rises against extortion and imposture. To-day we could not do without a guide; we had not time to find out things for ourselves; A. had but a few hours to devote to the old town; he was to return that evening to his paints and palettes — not paints and powders. We first of all bent our steps towards the Cathedral. Truly it is a thing of beauty. In the days of its perfect state it must have been a marvel. What remains of it far eclipses every other church in Holland. Nothing can approach it, or be compared with it. The adjoining cloisters, separating the church from the university, are worthy of their destiny. The Cathedral was formerly a large Gothic edifice, built in the thirteenth century, occupying the site of the original church founded by Willibrod, first Bishop of Utrecht, about the year 720. Thus for nearly 1200 years the spot has been consecrated to religion. On the 1st of August, 1674, the nave of the church fell in, during a terrific storm. Henceforth the remainder of the church was separated from the fine old tower, which still stands, a land beacon, to be seen from all points of the surrounding country. To ensconce yourself in a corner of the cloisters and gaze through the broken arches at the beautiful monument beyond them; with its flying buttresses and pointed windows; its decorative stonework and delicate tracery standing out here and there in its age like some exquisite lace work of the olden time; was to withdraw from this world into one long past, and fall insensibly into a delicious dream of architectural beauty and bygone realities from which you would not care quickly to awaken. I am anxious to give a few extra words to this structure; to impress it upon the reader; for it was one of the very few that delighted me in Holland; the only one I left with regret; with last long lingering looks; with a wish to return to it over and over again; the only one that excited my imagination and love of the beautiful to the highest degree, and summoned up those feelings that can never be absent when you stand before these monuments of genius and high art, whose perfections and charms are increased a hundredfold by the at once kind and cruel hand of Time.

After a long gaze at this beautiful structure, taking it from all points of the cloisters, as well as from the outside, we discovered that we had half an hour to spare before an organ rehearsal was to be given in the cathedral. We crossed over to the fine old tower; and nothing would satisfy A. but the gratification of an insane wish to ascend it. Its height is 321 feet by 70 square at the base. A grand, grey monument, hoary with age. The ascent was fatiguing

to the last degree from the shallowness of the steps and their immense number. A short distance upwards and we reached the



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first stage. It had been fitted up into rooms, and a counter bristled with bottles and glasses, Schiedam and beer. A syren came forward and pressed upon us her wares. Where next would they establish

their trades? The crafty old guide sat himself down in a chair, and invited us to a like siesta. Then, as we did not hasten to offer him of the juice of the grape or the juniper, he called for a bottle holding about a quart of beer, drank it off quickly, and condescendingly allowed us to settle up matters with this ecclesiastical vivandière.

We reached the summit at last. The view is extensive, and perhaps worth the ten minutes' treadmill of which it is the reward. On a clear day the whole of Holland lies stretched before you, and something beyond. With a telescope you may discern Rotterdam, Amsterdam, the Zuyder Zee, and many other places; besides part of Guelderland and North Brabant. Imagine ascending a tower that disclosed the whole of England at one view. How much this says for the flatness of the country. We gained an excellent idea of the town, its streets, and numerous churches. Immediately below us was the square, the cathedral, beautiful from any point of view, and the cloisters. Above us, crowning the tower, a figure of St. Martin on horseback served as a weathercock—the Saint having given his name to the church. Immediately below us were the chimes, consisting of 42 bells, and they treated us to a benefit. Out clashed a peal that might have done service at the wild orgies of Pandemonium, and then the hour boomed forth. The old tower trembled and vibrated beneath the strokes.

We bestowed some time upon this remarkable view, which shows forth the town with its walks and ramparts, the surrounding and far-off fields and dykes, trees, and towns, canals and seas, inland and beyond land, and returned to earth. On his way down the guide seemed inclined to call for another bottle of beer, but without ceremony we took the lead and continued our circuitous journey; a sufficiently intoxicating proceeding, without any outward help. We entered the cathedral as the organ was playing, and for half an hour found ourselves in "sweetest strains o'erwhelmed." The organist played well, and his selection was excellent. But the interior of the church is as disappointing as the exterior is grand and beautiful. It is cut up into sections, and disfigured by the most frightful woodwork and gallery which runs round the centre like a huge screen, and makes a small area still smaller. Instead of making the most of what remained of the cathedral, it has been ruined by bad taste and judgment. Even the exterior is not to escape. This year, we were told, the whole will be renovated, or it would crumble to ruin. Then farewell to its beauty; to all the feelings of awe and admiration which take possession of you as you gaze upon this remnant of a once glorious church.

When the music was over we left, and piloted by the guide, who had dozed serenely during the performance under the combined influences of melody and beer, we went through the town, and into that part where the shops showed something of life and business:

something of the "spirit of the age," with their great plate-glass windows and French and Viennese wares. Here the Utrecht velvet displayed itself in gorgeous perfection, as coverings for chairs and sofas, worked-in with brilliant pieces of tapestry produced at the loom by hands that certainly could have lost none of their cunning. But the manufactories of Utrecht conceal themselves artfully. Those who want to see them must search. They do not proclaim aloud their existence at the corners of the streets. Utrecht bears no signs of a manufacturing town; no tall, smoky chimneys betray themselves, or I did not see them; the air is not impregnated with a thick vapour like that which renders the Black districts of England more terrible than a Dante's Inferno. Lastly, we entered the ecclesiastical museum; a collection of Roman Catholic pictures, signs, symbols, and relics; gorgeous vestments, elaborately chased gold and silver plate, and jewelled cups and chalices. The collection is worth a visit. I have never seen one precisely of this kind elsewhere. But many of the inhabitants of Utrecht are Roman Catholic, with their representative cathedral and archbishop, wealth, relics, and collections have had ages in which to increase and multiply.

I wanted a quill pen. In my solitary room at night, when A. should have returned to Amsterdam; to his beloved palette, which attracted him from all other objects like an unseen magnet; I felt that I could beguile the sleepless hours by fulfilling rashly-made promises and writing letters to distant friends. Under the influence of this dignified old town, almost within the very shadow of the cathedral, they would breathe forth an atmosphere that would unconsciously affect the privileged recipients as much as a page out of Butler's Analogy, or a chapter from Paley's Evidences. We searched the town, but in vain. Shop after shop was stormed, with the same result. A quill pen was not to be found. Either they had exhausted their stock, or quills in Utrecht are unknown. It is just possible that the Dutch geese, like the Shakers, are peculiar birds; a sect unto themselves; and do not grow quills upon their wings. This is a problem that ornithologists would do well to look into. Be the fact as it may, it remains that I had to go without my quill; and that night scratched away upon thin paper with a hard steel pen, that of a surety diminished the solemn aroma with which I had intended to point my sentences.

This wild-geese chase after a quill took up the remaining portion of the afternoon, and we returned to the hotel just in time for the table d'hôte. It was very quiet, and considering that we were not above ten people at table, very good. The landlord himself looked after the waiters and superintended the dishes; a rule that landlords would do well to adopt more frequently.

Dinner over, so also was A.'s sojourn in Utrecht. We wandered forth leisurely towards the station. Every here and there—vistas down a street, houses overlooking a canal; a quaint corner; a long

stretch of water with its deepening reflections—we came upon a picturesque bit sufficient to have tempted an artist to a lengthened stay in the old place. Utrecht is higher above the level of its canals than any other town in Holland; and this alone gives to it, as you walk about and observe the fact, a pleasant sense of elevation, a seeming depth to its banks and its water that you get nowhere else. Twilight, almost darkness, was gathering rapidly as we went. The town put on its night aspect. Gas in the shop windows of the long street leading to the station made its appearance. Lights streamed from many upper windows. The scene was warm and cheerful if not animated. A. had a fancy for a glass of curaçoa before starting, and turned into a respectable-looking wine place with his request. The matron behind the counter, with offended dignity, informed him that she did not serve out glasses: nothing less than a bottle. Her cap-ribbons bristled with rage at so much insult, like the tail of a cat on the defensive. A. found himself non-plussed. I could not trust him on his journey with a whole bottle of curaçoa as sole companion. In vain he protested. I was severe as an oracle, and much more intelligible. So we went on minus the curaçoa, and reached the station. He was off at last; though with all my instructions about keeping awake, and not getting out at a wrong station, or changing trains when he ought to remain quiet, I did not feel at all sure that I should ever see him again.

I wended my way back, strolled about the town for a short time, and returned to the hotel. They had given me a cozy, comfortable room, one of the best the house afforded. As I sat steel—not quill—driving, at due intervals the chimes crashed out their protest against the rapid flight of time, and the great bell marked the hours in a dull sonorous voice, particularly agreeable to one's feelings and inspiring to one's thoughts. At length, as all household sounds ceased, and my sentences grew longer and more involved—to the distraction of those to whom they were addressed—and the candles shortened in inverse ratio to the sentences, I feared I might be left in total darkness and at the mercy of the spirits of evil. So, wisely, I turned in, and sought my pillow, and quickly found rest and oblivion from all things mundane.

That pillow is often a good friend to many of us; to some the best friend they possess in this world. There they lose the ills they have without flying to others they know not of. Pains of mind and body fall off and are remembered no more: until a cruel awakening, when a certain vague sense of oppression haunts them in the first moments of half-retained consciousness with a terror worse than any inspired by a vampire or a judge in the fatal black cap. Happily for me I had a quiet conscience and a sound body, and was at peace with all the world. I remember in my dreams that night I was building a cathedral that should utterly eclipse all the beauties of Cologne and Notre Dame, Amiens and Westminster. Utrecht was

to form its site. Its pavement was to be of gold, and its pillars of crystal. Each window was to be composed of a single precious stone; and the darkness of night was to be illumined by a stream of self-supplying light issuing from an enormous diamond suspended from the centre of the high vaulted roof. Years went on. The structure was raised in all its beauty. The whole world flocked to gaze at the wonder. I had become a grey-haired ecclesiastic, centuries old, and was preaching to a crowd of eager listeners from a pulpit of marbles taken from the temple of Solomon, whose buried existence had been revealed by inspiration. I was denouncing my hearers if they turned not from their evil ways; the eternal judgments were ripe for the sickle; the vials of wrath were poured out; even now could they not hear the avenging angels knocking at the closed portals for admission—when I awoke with an unmistakable knocking at my own door, and a Dutch voice proclaiming eight bells. In a moment my glorious structure, grey hairs, listening flock, world-fame vanished, and like the baseless fabric of the vision it was, left not a wreck behind.



CLOISTERS, UTRECHT.

Breakfast over, and dispensing with the irrepressible guide, I strolled out to pay a visit to the exhibition then being held in Utrecht. It was not on a very large scale, but contained many excellent objects. Old-fashioned articles of furniture; delightfully carved chairs and tables; new-fashioned pianos, and organs with remarkable combinations of the celestial voice and double bass; pictures that must not be too severely criticised, agricultural implements of all descriptions, and exquisite and impossible lace at a hundred guineas a yard, that many a fair dame would have gone through fire and water to possess. It was the last day of the show, and there was a sleepiness and

inaction about the guardians of these treasures that seemed to say they had had quite enough of Utrecht and its people.

Passing out I turned into a tempting old curiosity shop. There I found a wonderful specimen of engraved ruby glass, a perfect work of art from the depth and beauty of the workmanship. I carried it away in triumph, and took as much care of it in going through Holland as a nurse would give to her young charge. It travelled with me into Friesland, Guelderland, and I know not where. But on the very last stage of my journey, just when I thought all danger was over, as fate would have it, it was broken into twenty fragments. In that shop the man showed me as a great favour—a favour, he declared, seldom bestowed upon anyone—three pieces of old Worcester china, certainly rare enough. He did not care to sell them; would rather not; but if I was excessively taken with them, he would, to do me a pleasure, part with them for a hundred pounds. He was permitted to keep them.

My next destination was to be Zwolle, the capital of Over-Yssel, a province seldom visited by travellers. I desired to see the curious old place, and the still more curious old town of Kampen. I was also anxious to discover whether any traces remained of the monastery inhabited for so many years by Thomas à Kempis; and I wished to visit the tomb of the saint, and gaze upon the spot where his bones rested. For according to many authorities here he lies buried; a statement which cannot be too speedily corrected, for neither his bones nor his ashes rest here. Zwolle lay on my road to Friesland, and therefore was in all ways convenient to my plans. So before twelve o'clock that day I had bid adieu to my attentive host, turned my back upon Utrecht, its beautiful old church and cloisters, its shady groves, and calm dignity, and with many a wish to revisit it at some future period, turned my face northwards.

CHARLES W. WOOD.



CROSS PURPOSES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "POLLY."

IT is far on in the month of April, and the wooded hills surrounding Ussher Court are glowing with purple and olive tints in the spring sunshine. The trees are always late here in budding forth into tender greens, being nipped and chilled by the sea breezes and storms.

That comfortable and sociable meal, breakfast, has just been partaken of in the oak-panelled morning-room of the great house, but the different members of the family residing at the Court have not yet dispersed. Sir John and Lady Ussher, with their two daughters, are still lingering at the table. A boy of about fourteen rises, very unwillingly, to follow his tutor, who stands awaiting him at the chamber door. The tutor, Mr. Stuart, is tall, and powerfully built, though well proportioned. He has laughing blue eyes, and a long silky brown beard, which he loves to stroke occasionally.

During the year which has passed since William Stuart left the University, his chief difficulty has been that of trying to keep before his mind the fact that he occupies a subordinate position in life. It comes so naturally to him to hold his head aloft, and to speak in steady confident tones, that he is, even now, ever and anon forgetting himself, taking the lead in conversation, and behaving altogether more as if he were a son rather than a tutor in the house. He has but one pupil, the youth before mentioned, whose name is Robert, but this is generally shortened into Bob. At a renewed summons from his preceptor, he now follows the latter. The two have hardly left the room when Isabel Ussher, a handsome, haughty-looking girl, turns to her father, saying :

"And is it quite certain, papa, that you will not take a house in London this season, even for one month?"

"My dear, I am sure that question was definitely settled before. We ought, as I told you, to be retrenching our expenditure, in place of increasing it. Why do you torment me in this way, when you know that I hate talking about such things?" And Sir John got up from his seat at the head of the table. He was a silent studious man, and rather disliked entering into a discussion upon any subject whatever. His daughter sulked and pouted.

"I think it is very provoking," she said. "I can't bear going about with Aunt Chenevix. Mamma would be so much pleasanter as a chaperon."

"Then do not go to London at all this year," suggested her elder sister, Evasia. The latter was a slight pale woman, past her first youth,

but looking older than she really was. Her manner was subdued, and her eyes drooped often with an expression of weariness. They were such sad eyes that you were tempted to think she must have wept out all the fire and brilliancy they had ever possessed. Her sight was weak, and she continually wore spectacles when engaged at anything to which she needed to pay close attention. She put them on now, as she drew a piece of fancy work out of her pocket while she spoke to Isabel.

The beauty tossed her graceful head angrily, but this was the only attention she paid to the advice offered. She did not even take the trouble of saying she would decline to follow it; and Evasia began to employ her hands, seemingly in no way surprised. She was a fragile, delicate-looking girl, but she, nevertheless, enjoyed excellent health, as did also her sister.

Neither of Sir John and Lady Ussher's two sons was, however, constitutionally strong, although the younger, our acquaintance Bob, was a tall well-grown lad, endowed with plenty of muscular power, and with a very wholesome horror of everything in the shape of study, or of useful instruction.

"I suppose Browne costs you a full hundred a year, papa," Isabel said, turning again to her father, "and he is hardly ever of any use to us, only to Philip." Sir John nodded a silent assent to her remarks.

"If Philip would only marry some one with money, he could pay his man's expenses himself then, out of his wife's pocket," she continued peevishly. "Mamma, why don't you invite some rich girl here now; at once; before Phil returns from Ireland?"

Lady Ussher glanced nervously towards her elder daughter as she answered, "I have been considering different things; and I intend to write and ask poor Walter Lee's widow to come and spend May and June with us. She is young and good-looking; and she had a large fortune of her own. And then, you know, Walter came in for a good property, unexpectedly, shortly after he married, and everything has been left to his wife to do just as she would with."

Evasia bent her head down over her work. Her father looked at her, and then out of the window, and began to whistle softly.

"Anabel Lee is well enough," observed Isabel. "But if you invite her here you must also ask her companion, Lucy Campbell—a stupid insignificant little girl."

"Philip is to bring Colonel Foster back with him from Ireland, to spend his leave with us," Lady Ussher returned. "You must stay at home and help to entertain all these people, Isabel."

Mrs. Lee accepted the invitation given to her, and a day early in May was fixed on for her arrival. It was not yet quite two years since her husband's death; but, although she shrank from the thought of taking part in London gaieties, she was pleased to visit Ussher

Court, Walter Lee having been distantly related to its inhabitants. When the important morning came, even the unobservant tutor perceived that there was an unusual stir and agitation in the house. He began to think that the coming visitor, whom he heard talked of, must be some very imposing and important personage.

"I wonder what sort of a lady this is who is to arrive here this afternoon?" he said to his pupil, as they waited in the drawing-room for Sir John to appear and read family prayers.

"There are two ladies asked, and I'm sure we don't want either of them," Bob answered, absently. He was busily considering how he could induce his mother to allow him to go out some evening shortly for a night's sea-fishing, with a young man in the neighbourhood whose society he was very fond of. He made his request at the breakfast-table as boldly as he could, but hardly with a hopeful mind or tone.

"What hour could you return home?" Lady Ussher inquired. "You know I will not have you out late."

The boy's face fell. "Tanner would bring me in at twelve, I suppose, if I asked him."

"You must give up all idea of going," his mother remarked, decisively. "I will not even hear of your being upon the water at such a time of the night, with your delicate chest."

"Tanner would take Mr. Stuart, too, if you wished," the lad said in an entreating voice; but Lady Ussher remained firm in her refusal to give the desired permission, although she seldom denied her youngest and favourite child anything which he had set his heart upon. Bob moped all the forenoon, and did but little at his books. He only shrugged his shoulders discontentedly when his tutor attempted to console him by remarking that he might have some fun after the arrival of the visitors, and when his brother, Mr. Ussher, had returned home. "He comes to-morrow, you know," added William Stuart.

"He is a great swell; he isn't up to any game," grumbled the boy, who seldom opened his mouth without giving utterance to some slang expression.

As a sort of compensation for his disappointment, Lady Ussher sent him and his preceptor into town in the carriage to meet the guests at the railway station; and, in spite of his vaunted nonchalance concerning the arrivals, Bob's spirits rose perceptibly at the prospect of getting a first glimpse at the young widow, of whom he shrewdly saw that a great deal was to be made. He was very quiet and gentlemanly in his behaviour until the ladies had taken their seats in the barouche. He should have stepped in next, but, in place of doing so, he gave a sudden shout, something like the war whoop of a red Indian. "Oh, I say, there's Tanner!" he exclaimed. "I must go and speak to him."

Mr. Stuart caught him by the arm; but the boy shook off the

detaining grasp and escaped, running round the corner of the next street with all possible speed. The idle folk who were loitering about the terminus gazed after him in surprise, while one of the strangers in the carriage began to laugh, lifting her veil as she did so, in order to catch a final glimpse of the truant. The perplexed tutor sent a footman in pursuit of his pupil, and then turned to apologise to the ladies for the necessary delay. He had hitherto hardly observed their appearance, and he now bestowed but a very cursory glance upon one of them, a fair-haired retiring girl, for his gaze was at once attracted and riveted by a pair of dark eyes gleaming with amusement, chiefly caused at this moment by the comical look of dismay and provocation which his features wore.

"Your brother seems to be a great madcap," the owner of the eyes said. A wild and foolish longing that he were, indeed, Sir John Ussher's eldest son and heir, shot for an instant into William Stuart's heart, bringing a shade of pallor to his cheek; and his answer was hurried.

"My name is Stuart. I am this hero's afflicted tutor—not his brother."

The lady's face changed somewhat. An expression of disappointment flitted across it. She was a quick-witted woman, and had gathered even from Lady Ussher's first letter of invitation that she was asked to Ussher Court with a purpose, and had guessed what that purpose was. She felt rather provoked now at finding that this handsome, gentlemanly, and prepossessing young man was not, as she had supposed, Philip Ussher.

In the opinion of some persons, Anabel Lee, apart from her wealth and position, was a woman of merely ordinary attractions. She was small and plump, and not particularly graceful in her movements. Her face was not beautiful, but then her eyes were. Looking into them was like gazing into a well of cool refreshing water on a sultry summer's day. They were soft and limpid, and ever changeful in their depth of colouring. You could see into her soul through these windows, and no page that was not pure and honest was ever read therein by any curious beholder.

When Bob reappeared, he subsided sheepishly into his corner of the carriage, muttering a number of excuses for his behaviour. "Tanner had been telling him something, and afterwards he was obliged to buy some cord that he required; but for this he should have returned sooner." He relapsed into silence then, and remained solemnly unobtrusive for some time, until Anabel said she supposed he was a great sportsman, upon which he brightened up, and ejaculated, "Rather," in an impressive tone of voice. She responded to this by the use of some new and fashionable slang term, although she hastened to condemn the use of what she called "a vulgar style of language." Bob was deeply interested in these matters, however, and when he had discovered that she could put him up to many

expressions hitherto quite unknown to him he proved an apt pupil.

"Mrs. Lee is a brick," Bob remarked confidently to his sister that evening; but Eva had been far more won by the gentle companion than by her patroness. She at once took Lucy into her heart, forming for her one of those sudden friendships which, in some cases, prove lasting. Her eyes strayed over, again and again at dinner, to the shy and blushing girl, whose face she thought was the fairest she had ever seen. The evening sunlight was streaming in upon her small graceful head, and turning her hair into a halo of adornment. Bob had gallantly offered his arm to lead her into the dining-room; but, as he sat between her and Mrs. Lee, his whole attention was given to the latter, and he never even glanced towards his legitimate dinner partner. The young tutor sat next Miss Ussher: and he, too, looked across the table. His companion believed that his eyes went in the same direction as hers, and at last, towards the end of dinner, she said softly to him, "Don't you think she is very beautiful?"

"I never saw anyone half so beautiful before," he observed, as he drew a long breath which was something akin to a sigh. Eva smiled, and a small romance arranged itself before her mind.

"Her eyes are like the blue sky on a sunshiny day. I hope only that she may have plenty of bright summer weather in her life to keep them serene," she murmured half to herself; and then she saw the young man's blank look of surprise.

"Oh, you mean Miss Campbell, I suppose," he exclaimed, with a sudden glance of comprehension. "I don't think I care much about her face. She reminds me of one of those sea flowers that shrink away if you only touch them with your finger."

This description of Lucy Campbell's characteristics was not unapt. She was a girl born, it would seem, to be crushed and kept down, for she never, in any case, asserted her rights, or exacted deference from others. All attention paid to her she received with unassuming gratitude, and repaid generally with warm devotion to the giver. Hitherto she had seen but little of life, having only within the last couple of years left the seclusion of her Scottish home, which she had exchanged for that of Mrs. Lee.

It was late next evening before the heir of the house returned home with his friend. When the bustle of the arrival had subsided, Colonel Foster made his appearance in the drawing-room.

To Lady Ussher's evident vexation, her son did not come downstairs. "I wonder what can be delaying Philip?" she said at last. "He has been so very anxious to make your acquaintance," she continued, turning to Anabel; who sat on a low couch at her side, busy with some fancy work.

"We had a terribly rough passage, and I fear he is a good deal

knocked up, poor fellow," Colonel Foster observed. But this remark was, plainly, not welcome to Lady Ussher: who rose and left the room. In the hall she met her son's valet, an enormous man, considerably over six feet in height. He stood aside to let her pass, but she paused to speak.

"I want to know, Browne, why Mr. Ussher has not joined us? He appeared to be perfectly well when he arrived?"

"According to my judgment, my lady, my master is fit for nothing but his bed to-night, and he is of the same opinion himself," the man answered, respectfully.

"Oh, nonsense!" was the angry rejoinder of his mistress. "He must come down this evening, if only for a few minutes. Now that we have visitors staying in the house it would be exceedingly awkward for him not to appear."

"Well, my lady," the servant said, dubiously, "if you send Colonel Foster out to me, I will do what I can: but ——"

Lady Ussher waited to hear no more. She returned to the drawing-room, and told her guest, with many apologies, that her son wanted him for a moment. Colonel Foster hurried away, and presently reappeared, bringing with him a slight youthful-looking man of about six or seven and twenty years of age, who leaned upon his companion's arm. This was Philip Ussher; and Anabel looked up, at his entrance, with a glance of interest, which was not unobserved by the mistress of the house. His face was wan and pale, and there were dark lines drawn under his eyelids, telling of suffering to a close observer, but his eyes shone and sparkled with feverish brilliancy. They were grey in colour, handsome, and adorned with long dark lashes, such as a woman might have envied. He seemed to take in the whole room and its occupants during the quick comprehensive look he cast around, as he stood upon the threshold. His sister and Lucy Campbell sat near a table, and, when the necessary introductions had been made, he obeyed a gesture made by his mother, and took possession of an easy chair near Anabel, with whom he entered into conversation. Bob, close at hand, tried hard to engross at least a share of the young widow's attention.

"I fear that Philip is feeling very much done up to-night," Eva observed, anxiously, in a low voice to her companion. "He is so wonderfully sober and quiet."

Lucy gave a shy surprised glance over at the grave face of the subject under discussion. There was even a certain amount of severity, now, about the lines of his mouth. "Is he generally very gay and merry, then?" she whispered, in wondering tones. "I should have thought he would be always as solemn as a—judge."

"Appearances are deceitful you see," Eva said. "On the contrary, he is such a dear quicksilver fellow that I am sure you will not like him at all. You are so sober yourself," and she laid her hands caressingly, for an instant, on her new friend's slender white fingers,

which held a large book of engravings open. Lucy gave a pleased grateful little smile; and now, with her sensitive face glowing, again looked across the room. She dropped her eyes upon the picture before her, however, for she found that both Lady Ussher and her son were gazing at her, although with an expression each of very different meaning. One glance spoke of admiration, of tender, respectful homage; the other showed dislike and distrust. Philip saw that a painful blush rose even to the young girl's temples; he turned away and resumed his conversation with Mrs. Lee. Each endeavoured to appear deeply interested in what the other had to say. Anabel was speaking and Philip was, apparently, listening attentively, when he put his hand to his breast, with an involuntary exclamation of pain.

"I beg your pardon," he said, pronouncing every syllable with that slow distinct utterance, which betrays that each word is articulated with suffering, and by a strong mental effort of will on the part of the speaker, "but I—Foster, will you ring the bell for my man, and tell him to get me some brandy—or—something." He made a resolute effort to stand up, feeling about for some support, as if he were blind, but fell back helplessly into his chair, in a half swoon. From this he recovered in a few moments, hastily wished them all good night, and went up to his own room.

"It is no wonder that one should suffer from the effects of that dreadful Channel passage," Lady Ussher observed, breaking the dismayed silence which had fallen upon all present. "There are but very few who escape being quite done up by it. I have always said that I thought Irish tours were a mistake, and I am now more than ever persuaded that I am right. With my consent Philip shall never visit Ireland again."

The whole family had assembled in the drawing-room next morning, with the exception of Sir John, before the invalid of the previous evening made his appearance. He paused for an instant at the door, irresolutely, and a momentary flush of embarrassment rose to his cheek, but he recovered himself immediately, assuming an air of extra composure and sprightliness. His face was no longer wan and distressed; but the blue veins, showing on his white forehead and in his transparent hands, told of delicate health. Making a comically reverential bow to all present, he informed his sister that she ought to introduce him over again to her friends. "I made their acquaintance and claimed their compassionate interest upon false pretences as an invalid, last night," he said. "Richard is himself again now."

"You certainly do look quite a new man, after your twelve hours' rest," Eva remarked.

"I hope it is a case of '*pulchrior resurgo*,'" he exclaimed, looking up from under his long eyelashes with a glance which, in a woman, would have been called shy and appealing.

"I always heard it was very rude to talk in dead languages before ladies," Bob remarked, with an air of important solemnity, very much put out at the interruption his brother's entrance had effected between himself, his tutor, and Anabel. Her attention was now drawn away. She was observing Philip keenly.

"Don't you mean that you think it unkind to quote Latin before little boys who ought to understand what is said, but—who do not?" suggested Philip.

"I am no little boy," cried Bob, swelling with indignation, at being thus addressed before Mrs. Lee. "I am very nearly as tall as you are, Philip, and I am just twice as strong. I don't need to have to go off to bed after a sea voyage."

"Hold your tongue, you sir," whispered Mr. Stuart into his pupil's ear, while Colonel Foster quietly turned to him. "My dear boy, when a soldier has been wounded it is never considered any disgrace for him to leave the battle-field."

"A man can't be wounded when he doesn't fight," retorted the lad.

"He did fight, however, with the elements, yesterday: and they are tough enemies enough. Some one has said that the only good thing in Ireland is the west wind, to blow you out of it. I wish we had been favoured with that boon."

Philip laughed, and shuddered, as he echoed this wish. "My mother always tells me that Ireland is a mistake," he said. "I almost begin to agree with her. Certainly we Saxons have had bad sport there, this year. If only some Cassandra had quoted, beforehand, to us Dante's '*Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate*,' we might have all remained at home perhaps. I have not offended now, Bob. I quoted Italian, and all ladies are supposed to understand that. Are they not?" he asked, turning to Lucy Campbell, near whom he stood.

"I know it, but then my mother was an Italian," she answered, softly, a bright blush lighting her face. Philip fell into a reverie, which Bob soon interrupted by inquiring, with vivacity, as to what the bad sport was to which reference had been made, and who had it.

"We had," laughed Philip; "and the X eleven were beaten, again and again, down in the South. Foster and I pitied their wounded feelings so much that we invited them to spend a day with us, but the plucky fellows told us plainly that their sorrows were beyond our reach. Fact is, they were going for a drinking bout at Killarney."

"But your own sport?" urged Bob, while his mother reproved her elder son for telling improper stories.

"Our own sport!" Philip answered, with an air of deep consideration and solemnity, giving a mischievous glance over at the Colonel, who answered it by pushing a chair to his friend. "Oh, that consisted principally of a cat and three rabbits. They came rather expensive too: something like seven-and-sixpence a head."

"But of course you had plenty of fishing, and I suppose you caught some fine salmon," Bob said, while the rest were laughing.

His brother shook his head. "We caught no salmon," he replied, "and we did not often throw our lines at all. Browne doesn't approve of fishing; and he is strong enough, mentally and bodily, to see that all his vetoes are attended to."

The young widow turned away in contempt. "Overridden by a servant," was her mental scornful observation, upon this speech, as she resumed her conversation with the tutor. They had fallen into a discussion upon horsemanship, a subject deeply interesting to both of them.

Lucy Campbell had seen and interpreted, with a little thrill of pain, the expression of repulsion which had momentarily flashed into her friend's face. "Is that very tall man your servant Browne?" she asked softly, blushing and trembling at her own presumption.

"My man is a sort of giant; you could hardly mistake him for anyone else," answered Mr. Ussher, sitting down at her side. "He has strength which is quite extraordinary. I have seen him take a sailor up, by the belt, in his teeth, and give him a good shake, as a sort of joke."

Mrs. Lee, at this moment, turned a beaming face upon Philip, and asked him if he was fond of riding. Her manner was pleased and excited, for she was picturing to herself what delightful parties they might all make up. "As your name is Philip, you ought to love horses, you know," she said, softly and graciously.

The young man hesitated. "I used to be a devoted equestrian," he said, "but I don't ride much now. I find it somewhat fatiguing, and the inevitable, tyrannical Browne —"

Mrs. Lee began to tap the floor lightly with her foot, in her impatience and vexation: but at this moment Philip's valet came to him with a message from Sir John, who begged of his son to act as family chaplain that morning.

"What a volatile, irreverent leader we shall have!" Anabel thought. But she found she had, so far, misjudged him. His devout and serious manner, and his glowing upturned face, as he repeated, by heart, a short portion of the daily service out of the prayer-book, should have made her think better of him. With an ingenuity common to mankind, however, she only found a fresh occasion of offence in this new phase of his character, exhibited before her. "Weak, mentally and bodily, and changeable as the winds," she was inwardly murmuring, as she took her seat beside him at the breakfast table.

"You and Colonel Foster appear to be very much devoted to each other," she remarked to Philip.

"We are great friends," he answered, glancing across the table, with a grateful look at the somewhat heavy-featured officer who sat opposite. He is such a dear good fellow, so much more clever also

than he looks. Then he is so strong; and physical as well as mental strength is always admirable."

"I admire strength above everything," Anabel said, impulsively, and she too looked towards the other side of the room, although not in the direction of Colonel Foster. "All women do, I believe; but I cannot understand why you, who are a man, should care about strength in another man—unless——." Here she paused, and an involuntary gleam of compassion shone out of her beautiful eyes, as she turned them upon him.

"Unless it is that I am so weak, you mean," he answered, bringing out the word with an evident effort.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," she cried, with a thrill of compunction at having wounded him. But he laughed reassuringly, and reminded her that there were different kinds of strength, being wholly unaware that she judged him wanting in all sorts.

The pleasant summer days were passed in drives, visitings, luncheon entertainments, and picnic parties. The evenings were enlivened by much conversation, and by a good deal of instrumental music, of which both Lucy and Philip were passionately fond. Anabel, on the contrary, had no taste whatever in this way, and she often secretly chafed at being obliged, out of politeness, to appear to listen and admire, when she would have much preferred a merry discussion with her two friends, Bob and his preceptor. She enjoyed hearing the two musicians sing duets together, as they sometimes did; but these occasions were rare, for Lady Ussher threw all possible obstacles in the way of such a union of voices.

"As for those pieces you call songs without words, my dear, in which you delight, I can see no beauty in them: I call them sounds without song," the young widow said, one night, to her companion, as the two conversed alone together, according to their custom, before retiring to rest in their separate apartments. Lucy only shook her head over this speech. She did not contest the matter. It took a great deal to rouse her into an attitude of antagonism or defiance.

Bob pleaded hard for a holiday one Monday morning, and his mother allowed him to have his wish. But the weather proved provokingly unpropitious for the out-of-door amusements in which he delighted, and he wandered about disconsolately for a great part of the forenoon, gazing in turn from one window after another, in the vain hope of seeing some lightening in the cloud of driving mist which obscured the landscape. He settled down, at last, in a corner of the drawing-room, with a book, which he assured his tutor was much better worth perusal than the political pamphlet the latter held in his hand.

"'Masterman Ready' suits your taste, but I would sooner be an M.P. than a sailor," observed Mr. Stuart.

It wanted still an hour, or more, of the time when the luncheon

bell would ring, and every one seemed to be somewhat depressed by the gloomy aspect of the day. Anabel, Eva, and Lucy sat working together, at a small table placed in a large bow window. Philip was endeavouring to raise his own spirits, and those of other people, by making a series of jokes, some of which he illustrated with pen-and-ink sketches. Even this was getting wearisome, however; and Colonel Foster groaned audibly over the latest witticism, which he said had disturbed his study of the *Times* by its abominable flatness.

Anabel folded up her work, preparatory to going upstairs to write letters for the day's post, while the officer said grumblingly that, at the present rate of going on, it would certainly be about two hundred years before he became a general. The idea of waiting for promotion all this time struck the young widow as so very ludicrous that she burst into merry laughter. She was still laughing as she left the room, and Eva looked after her with an expression of wistful surprise, and murmured, half to herself, the words, "I cannot understand how she can be so happy."

"She is so good and kind that I think she ought to enjoy life," Lucy said, eager to ward off even the shadow of reproach from her friend. "And her laugh is so bright and sweet that I delight in hearing it."

"Nevertheless its frequency might puzzle you, as it does me, if you had known her husband—if you could comprehend what she has lost in losing him," replied Eva, with a visible effort. "I feel sure she never can have loved him."

"Indeed you are wrong there. I know she cared a great deal for Mr. Lee," Lucy exclaimed earnestly. "When I went to her room last night, I found her crying, with his picture in her hand, and she had a box of his letters open before her. I hope it is not dishonourable to tell you this, but I want, so much, to undeceive you, if you indeed believe she was careless about her husband."

The girls had talked in low undertones; but Philip, who was close at hand, caught a word here and there, and his quick intellect supplied the rest. He drew nearer to them.

"Shall I tell you what I think about the matter?" he said, quietly. "I believe that Walter Lee's great abilities, his handsome person, and his goodness, dazzled Mrs. Lee so much that when she married him she fancied herself in love with him; but that, as they lived together, their ideas and natures proved so unsympathetic that a cold current of division always ran between them. I judge this from my knowledge of their respective characters. Now that he is gone, she grieves, chiefly from an unacknowledged feeling gnawing at her heart, telling her that she does not really mourn his loss as such a man deserved to be regretted—and perhaps did not value him while he lived."

As Philip spoke he leaned against the embrasure of the window, near which Lucy sat, and his hand, accidentally, touched her soft hair. The contact sent a thrill of pleasure tingling through his veins,

and brought a deep blush into her fair face. Eva was looking sadly out into the clouds of fog and mist surrounding the house. The weather was beginning to brighten, and you could by this time get glimpses, here and there, of the view. Now a green field, now a great leafy tree was seen. In a somewhat similar manner scenes of the past life were rising up in pictures before Evasia Ussher's mind, out of the obscurity of vanished days.

"How keen you are, Philip," she observed, absently. "You see things almost as if you were a woman."

He made her an amused obeisance, saying that that compliment was one few men would care to receive. At this moment a note was brought in to Bob, who took it from the servant with a half-smothered exclamation of delight. He threw his book aside, and ran away to his own room, holding the envelope, still unopened, in his hand. From which sanctuary he did not reappear until luncheon time, when his spirits were so exuberantly high that his brother nick-named him Bellerophon, or Pegasus.

Lucy was sitting opposite to one of the windows, beside Philip,* to whose lot it generally fell to take her in to every meal, as the more important guest naturally went with the master of the house. A sudden gleam of bright light danced across the room just then, and illumined her with a halo of golden sunshine.

"It is going to be a lovely afternoon," she said, speaking out of her dazzling surroundings. "Everything will look fresh out of doors after the rain. We ought to go and behold the beauties of nature."

"I see them here," he whispered, gazing so earnestly and steadfastly into her blue eyes that she turned away in confusion: and thus met the cold, indignant glance of the mistress of the house.

"Philip used to have plenty of common sense, but he seems to be for the time bewitched by this wretched girl," Lady Ussher was murmuring to herself. "She is of good family, and we can't put her down as we might a common companion."

It was now quite plain to her ladyship that her plan of a union between her son and the rich young widow had little chance of being carried into effect. Her chief desire was to see her visitors depart. In the meantime she resolved to reason with Philip, without further delay, upon what she called the extreme impropriety of his behaviour with regard to Miss Campbell. "He has no right to delude a girl in her position into the belief that she is on a sufficient equality with him to allow of her indulging in a flirtation," she concluded, angrily.

William Stuart's face beamed with happiness to-day, as he took his seat at the luncheon-table, for fortune gave him a place next to Anabel. He resolved to forget the cloudy future for this one hour, to enjoy the blessed present: but his would-be oblivion, with regard to what coming days might have in store for him, was rudely broken in upon. For Mrs. Lee suddenly asked him what profession he in-

tended to take up, and looked at him, with deep interest gleaming in her beautiful eyes, as she waited for his answer.

"I don't know," he replied, gloomily. "I came here chiefly that I might have time to look about me, but I have not made up my mind to anything yet. Whatever I take to it is not likely that I shall meet with much success, for I belong to an unlucky clan."

"How is that?" she inquired, smiling. He had suddenly fallen into despondency so deep that it was hard to avoid the betrayal of amusement.

"King Charles lost his head; his family lost the throne; we lost our chief, and our good fortune," he exclaimed. Anabel's smile brimmed over into a laugh.

"Is that all?" she said. "Perhaps I belong to an unlucky clan, too, for I know my father came of a Highland family."

If she desired to rouse the tutor into forgetfulness of his own prospects, she succeeded in her purpose. He was at once all excitement and interest upon this new topic, and wanted to learn from what part of Scotland her ancestors had sprung. The young widow seemed rather careless about her own descent just now, however: she was, at the moment, intent on watching Bob. He was filling his pockets with all the good things of a portable sort which were within his reach, or which could be stuffed into those receptacles. Some soft sweet cakes, and a dish of figs disappeared; he then attempted to dispose of a couple of large over-ripe oranges, but, in order to get these into their berth, he had to draw forth a large loose purse, full of treasures. He held up his money-bag to his sister, saying reproachfully that she had long ago promised to mend it for him.

"I can't perceive any tear," she answered.

"Put on your spectacles, and you will see fast enough."

"If there was anything worth looking-at, I might put them on."

"If you only look in this direction you will see me," Philip remarked, with cool gravity: at which there was a laugh.

The whole party of young people, amongst whom it is only courteous to include the middle-aged officer, went out for a ramble about the pleasure-grounds that afternoon. This proved a great source of delight to a pet dog of Philip's. The little animal was a terrier, and most devoted to its master, who had named him Pixie. The two were inseparable when out of doors. The young man continually stooped to caress his little friend as he walked through the grounds this day, and once took the dog up in his arms, to examine into the cause of some half imaginary lameness. But a trial came for Pixie towards the end of the walk. Everyone turned into the enclosed shrubberies and gardens, through a gate opening off the great avenue, and within this portal no animal was ever allowed to pass. Philip shut the door upon the little dog's wistful, melancholy face, and hurried away from the sound of the whine of sorrow his favourite set up. He and Lucy were

behind the rest of the party. Bob had carried his sister off to look at a plant in which he took an interest, and which grew in a distant part of the garden. The three remaining promenaders were a little in advance upon the path. Anabel carried herself badly when on foot, as do most persons who have made a practice, as she had, from her youth, of rarely taking exercise except upon horseback. Philip was, on the contrary, a good and graceful walker, in spite of his ill health; and he went along now with as erect a carriage, and as light and elastic a step as though weakness and he had never been partners. He was extremely observant and fastidious as regards everything concerning a woman's gait, and he could not just then restrain himself from passing mental strictures upon the rather ungainly mode of progression used by the small, plump, black-robed figure before him.

At this moment all who were within earshot were startled by a sudden shriek of agony coming in upon the loud rumbling noise made by some vehicle passing slowly up the avenue, and followed by a clamour of angry voices. Everyone hastened back to the gate. Through some mischance, poor Pixie had been crushed under the wheel of a heavily-laden cart, and was now lying in the agonies of death. Labourers and servants had already gathered in numbers about the scene of the disaster. The trunk of a large fallen tree lay outside the garden door, and upon this Philip sat down, taking his dying friend into his arms. His sorrow was too deep for speech. Lucy stood silently by him for a few moments, and then turned and fled away into the house, the door of which stood open. She was found some time after by Mrs. Lee in her own room, lying upon a low couch, with her face buried in the cushions, in convulsions of hysterical sobs and tears.

"Oh, Anabel, Anabel," she cried, throwing herself into her friend's arms, "you must take me out of this house. If you will not come at once, I shall have to run away from you. I cannot stay here any longer, and I will not."

"And all because a little dog has died!" the young widow said, sarcastically.

"You know it is not that," Lucy sobbed out, indignantly. Anabel disengaged herself, and brought a glass of cold water from the toilet-table, saying, "Now my dear, just drink this, and then lie down again and go to sleep, while I sit here, at your table and write a letter for the evening mail. If you don't stop crying, you will be a pretty figure by dinner time."

"I shall not go down to dinner," said Lucy.

"Indeed, but you will. We are to be here only for a few days longer; and, if I can help it, there shall be no fuss made about us in the house, while we are present at any rate."

Lucy rose, and walked up and down the room, wringing her hands as she went.

"There is no one in the whole world, I believe, so miserable as I am," she moaned, passionately. "I have no home to go to, and no relations who care about me. I have just nothing in life but the power of seeing how wretched I am."

"Nonsense, child," returned Mrs. Lee, almost sharply. "You had much better do as I have told you. The accident has upset you. Lie down on the sofa, and go to sleep for awhile. The world is really not going to be half so miserable a place for you to live in as you are imagining. I can assure you I am a very good prophet."

The six o'clock dressing bell had rung out its noisy summons that same evening, when Mr. Stuart hurried down stairs, hoping to find Lady Ussher before she went to her chamber. She and Eva were in the library. He told her that his pupil was complaining of a bad headache, and had locked himself in his bedroom, declaring he would take no dinner. Lady Ussher said she supposed her darling was knocked up from hearing of that horrid accident; but her daughter observed that it was much more likely Bob had made himself ill by eating all the sweet things he had taken from the luncheon-table. They both tried to persuade the boy to let them go in and do something for him; but he was obdurate, and refused to open his door, saying that all he wanted, or wished for, was to be left alone in peace, so that he might have a sleep. When all persuasions proved useless, he was at last allowed to have his own way unmolested.

The ladies went into the dining-room without much ceremony that day, for Browne came to Lady Ussher with a message to the effect that she was not to wait for either his master or for Colonel Foster. The dinner had hardly been commenced, however, when the two gentlemen appeared. Philip slipped into his usual place beside Lucy, and made a feint at eating, and an attempt at keeping up his usual lively flow of talk: but the meal would have been dull and gloomy had not Sir John exerted himself to entertain his guests: and he could be a most agreeable host. He and Lady Ussher went together into the library after dinner, leaving the younger people to do as they would. This was Colonel Foster's last day at Ussher Court, and he went out for a long walk. Eva also went out, having been summoned to visit a sick woman in the neighbourhood, in whom she was much interested. The tutor went upstairs to look after his pupil; and thus it happened that the heir of the house was left to entertain the two lady visitors.

He proposed to read aloud to them a new poem, "*Tannhäuser*," and they began to work, and appeared to listen. I say appeared, for their thoughts were far too busy with their own affairs to be able to enter into the beautiful and deeply pathetic story of the recreant Knight and the fair Elizabeth. Anabel was certainly not attending

to the poetry. Every now and then she let her embroidery fall, and looked up with an air of expectancy. At last the door opened, and Mr. Stuart's handsome face appeared. He looked round the drawing-room, and then down at a paper he held in his hand, an expression of worry and perplexity overclouding his countenance, then departed as quickly and noiselessly as he had come.

The young widow started up, with a hasty apology to the reader, and followed him. Lucy rose to follow her; Anabel might need her, she said; but Philip threw his book aside, and caught her hand with a detaining grasp. It trembled in his clasp, and he saw that her eyes were red and swollen.

"Do not go, Lucy," he entreated: "I want you to stay with me always, if only you will consent to do so. You have shared a small grief with me to-day: will you not, for the future, take part in all my joys and sorrows?"

He drew her down beside him on a low couch, for both were too excited to stand; but she turned away, and covered her face with her hands. "Sir John and Lady Ussher—what would they say? Oh, it can never, never be as you wish," she whispered, in broken and scarcely audible tones.

"They will object, I suppose, of course," he said, sadly, "as my darling is not a great heiress; but I am old enough to choose for myself in this matter. I do not intend to let my happiness be wrecked, as Evasia's was. I have thought it all well over, and I feel sure we can manage to live very comfortably upon my own private income, which is what we shall have to depend on. Will you not be my wife, Lucy?"

She was longing to let herself realise all the blessedness that must be in store for her in the course of a life spent with him; but, even as she let him draw her nearer to him, she turned aside again, overwhelmed with misgivings, and by a dread lest she was acting dishonourably only in listening to him.

"I see how it is," he exclaimed, a little bitterly. "You are afraid to have anything to say to so wretched an invalid as I unfortunately sometimes am."

This accusation was too much for Lucy's strength of mind. She burst into tears, and allowed him to comfort her as he chose.

In the meantime, Anabel had overtaken the tutor in the hall, where he stood meditating in some perplexity, stroking his soft beard the while. He had knocked gently at his pupil's door directly after dinner, but Bob returned no answer. From this, William Stuart gathered that the boy was asleep. After a little delay he again went to the room; and, as all was still silent within, he again tried to turn the handle of the door. It yielded to his touch, for the bolt was no longer shot, and he found himself upon the threshold of an untenanted apartment. Bob's bed was empty, and untumbled, and he was not in any part of the chamber. An open letter lay

upon the floor, and this the perplexed young man now showed to Anabel.

"It seems to be a note," he said, "and, if it is, it may give some clue to the boy's whereabouts, but I have puzzled myself over the sheet in vain. The epistle, if it be indeed a letter, has been written in some kind of cypher, incomprehensible to me."

She took the paper out of his hand, and studied it attentively. Its contents ran as follows:

"Expensive 1s.—I expect 6 U 7.—Yours, 6d."

After a few minutes she began to laugh heartily. "Has not Bob some friend in this neighbourhood of the name of Tanner?" she asked. "I think he mentioned such a person the day that Lucy and I arrived: when he returned to us after his escapade at the station."

Mr. Stuart assented.

"And has there not been some plan on foot; some pleasuring got up by this young man, in which Bob wanted to take part, and in which his parents did not wish him to join?" Anabel continued.

Her companion looked at her with a wondering gaze. "I can't remember anything of the sort," he answered. "Stay, though—yes—Tanner asked the young fellow to go out with him for a night's sea-fishing, and Lady Ussher would not hear of it. Bob was very angry about the disappointment."

"I feel quite sure that your pupil has set off upon that delightful excursion now," the young widow observed, sagaciously. "See, this is how you are to read this hieroglyphical epistle, which is written in school-boy slang:

"Dear Bob,—I expect you between six and seven.

'Yours, Tanner.'

"We have come to the bottom of the lad's bad headache at last," the tutor exclaimed, laughing. "How cleverly you have made the puzzle out! I never should have thought it could prove useful to get oneself up in slang."

"Everything is useful, one time or another," Anabel said, rather absently. "But what do you purpose doing now?"

"I suppose I must go off in pursuit," was the rueful answer. "The wind is rising, and I think we are likely to have both a wet and stormy night. In any case, Lady Ussher would be in dire despair at Bob's being out late on the water, even if the sea were as calm as a mill-pond. When I am missed you will explain matters for me, I am sure: you are so good," he murmured, taking her hand into his. He dropped it almost instantaneously again, as if the touch of that small shapely palm had stung and wounded him. "I beg your pardon," he cried, hastily, and as it would appear, angrily.

She said nothing, but waited in the hall while he got on his coat

and hat, standing upon the doorstep to see him off. "I wish you success in your quest," she exclaimed. "I should dearly like to be going for a walk down to the shore to-night also. If only we women dared do as we would!" and Mrs. Lee sighed bitterly.

"If only we men could dare where we would!" William Stuart muttered, below his breath, as he pursued his way with a quick elastic step.

He had to walk a distance of nearly two miles, in order to gain the sea-side. Here he turned into a fisherman's cottage, to make inquiries. The man said he had seen the truant go out of the harbour a couple of hours before in young Mr. Tanner's yawl. He was himself just about to set off, also, on a fishing excursion; but, on the promise of a liberal reward, he agreed to put his skiff and arms at the tutor's service, for so long as he should require them.

The two had a tiresome row, but at last they descried the right boat; and they drew alongside it, just as the evening shadows were beginning to thicken into twilight. Bob was lying on the flat of his back, a prey to all the agonies of sea-sickness, against which he had believed himself quite secure, having never before experienced the terribly nauseating effect of sitting in a cockle shell at anchor, and swinging monotonously with the tide. One of the sailors held the boats together, while another lifted the groaning sufferer into his tutor's arms.

When the boat was once in motion again Bob recovered rapidly, but he bore, with exemplary and stolid equanimity, the various jibes and jokes which his tutor found it impossible to avoid throwing at him on their homeward journey. The lad winced on only one occasion, when the remark was made that it seemed there were two who could play at wounded soldiers, and at being lifted about the world.

There was, of course, a great commotion at Ussher Court about his escapade, and he was in dire disgrace with the home authorities next day. Anabel took pity on his gloomy looks, and carried him off to the gardens in the afternoon, to walk and talk with her. They had been alone together for some time, when she, hesitatingly, asked him if he liked Mr. Stuart.

"Oh, yes!" the boy answered, warmly. "He is a jolly good fellow; a brick, if ever there was one in the world;" and his hearer loved the speaker for the sake of this speech.

"I wonder why your sister Eva is always so sad and quiet?" the young widow said, while she stopped to gather a rose: for the question chanced to occur to her.

Bob assumed a confidential manner at once. "It is all owing to that nice fellow, Walter Lee," he observed, sagaciously. "The two were just awful spoons on one another, but mother wouldn't let them get married, because he hadn't money enough, and then he went

away and —— Oh! I beg your pardon," he cried, interrupting himself, his cheeks flaming with distress and confusion: "I did not once remember that he was—your—husband!"

"Never mind," she replied, coldly, plucking her rose to pieces as she walked along the path. She pulled for herself a little nosegay of sweetwilliam in the place of it, and wore the bouquet as a breast-knot all the evening, but no one understood the significance of that action except Philip Ussher, who saw nearly everything that went on before him. Colonel Foster went away that day, and it was settled then that the ladies were to leave on the following Saturday. Lucy was longing for the night to come; she was eagerly looking forward to the opportunity which she hoped that would bring her of pouring out her tale of happiness to her friend, and of consulting her as to whether she could lawfully and honourably accept Philip's love. Anabel had been so much excited the previous evening about Bob's disappearance and its results, that she had not been in tune for listening to any narration or for offering any advice. Lucy's story remained untold this night also, however, for when the young girl tapped at the door of her patroness's room, Anabel called out to say that they could have no talk then, as she was very busy. Her employment consisted in tearing up a number of letters into the smallest possible fragments, with which she strewed the floor around her, to the great discomfiture of the housemaid, whose business it was to make up the visitors' apartments. When the love-tale was, at last, related, Lucy was roused with gentle indignation by the way in which it was received. Her honourable scruples were laughed to the winds, and her lover was spoken of with ridicule and scorn.

"My dear, I only wish you had found some one more worthy of you," Anabel said. "But a man who plays the piano, and faints, and reads poetry aloud, would certainly not be to my taste."

On this same evening, Lady Ussher had made her way to her son Philip's room, bent upon remonstrating with him and making him, as she would say, "hear reason." She was thunderstruck when he quietly explained to her what his intentions were with regard to the despised girl. But when he went on to say that he was already an engaged man, her very lips grew white with indignation and smothered anger.

"May I inquire what you propose supporting yourself and your wife upon?" she asked, coldly.

"We must make my own private income suffice," he answered. "Unless I can succeed in obtaining some employment."

"Hitherto, although you have been alone, it has not ever proved sufficient even to pay and keep Browne," she remarked, sarcastically. "Your father has always borne his expenses."

"Browne must go, of course," Philip answered, firmly; but he felt sad at the thought of parting with a servant endeared to him by long and faithful devotion.

It was arranged that the two days previous to the guests' departure should be sacrificed to the claims of society. Many of the county families had shown attention to the young widow, and it was only right that she should pay a round of farewell visits before leaving Ussher Court. But when the carriage came to the door on Thursday Anabel was suffering from a severe nervous headache, and was quite unequal to any effort. She gave her card-case to Lady Ussher, however, and entreated that no alteration should be made in the day's proceedings on her account, saying that her maid could do everything for her she might require. Her hostess assented to her wishes; but her face darkened when she saw her daughter and Lucy come down stairs together, dressed ready for the drive. The latter had unwillingly prepared herself for what was, to her, a painful ordeal, in obedience to the commands of her patroness, and to the entreaties of Eva. She trembled, now, under the cold glance cast on her by Lady Ussher, and turned a reproachful and mutely appealing look upon Eva. Philip came out of the library at the moment and saw this piteous gaze. When he discovered that there was to be a vacant seat in the carriage, he at once proposed that he should occupy it; but his mother hastily negatived the idea, and he yielded to her wish without dispute, and tried to console himself under the disappointment by setting forth upon a solitary walk. Bob and his tutor had left the house in the early morning, with the intention of spending a long day fishing in some distant river.

As the afternoon wore away, Anabel's headache got better. She was lying half asleep in her room, when she felt a sudden and irresistible longing for a waft of the sea breezes. She rose, dressed herself, and left Ussher Court alone, silencing the remonstrances of her maid by assuring her that a walk to the seaside would complete the cure already begun by rest and quietness.

When Mrs. Lee reached the water's edge, she sat down on a large stone and fell into a reverie, taking her hat off and letting the cooling wind blow her hair about. After a time she got up, and began to pace backwards and forwards on a portion of the beach, still deep in meditation, but no longer bareheaded. The shore was very extensive in this neighbourhood, stretching along for miles of uneven winding strand, intercepted here and there by jutting rocks, and bounded by sloping cliffs and hills of sand. As Anabel continued her lonely walk, she was startled, now and again, by a cry which she took, at first, to be the note of a curlew, or of some other sea bird. As it was repeated, however, it took to her ear the form of the words, "Help! help!" When this idea gained possession of her, she went rapidly on in the direction from which the sound came; and, at last, upon turning round a projection of large boulders, heaped together, and covered with damp seaweed, she ascertained that her imagination had not deceived her: some one was lying on the ground at a little distance off; and was now, once more, calling thus for help.

On approaching the recumbent figure, she recognised Philip Ussher, who was stretched at full length upon the shingle, his head being supported on a stone. He looked so composed, and so entirely at his ease, as he smiled a welcome to her, that a feeling of indignant irritation rose up in Mrs. Lee's mind: she believed that he had summoned her as a sort of practical joke. She was quickly undeceived, however. He had fallen a couple of hours before, his foot slipping between some large loose flints, which had either broken or severely sprained his ankle. He had succeeded in sitting himself into a position in which he was now tolerably easy, but the slightest movement caused him agony, which brought a deathlike pallor into his face.

"You are the first person I have seen all this time," he said, glancing up at her, and then at the advancing tide. "You have not come a moment too soon, for, as you see, I am lying far below watermark. If I were like any other man," he added sadly, "I might manage to creep up out of danger, no matter what pain it cost me to do so; but any great suffering, or over-fatigue, or, indeed, even any disagreeable mental shock, brings a deadly faintness upon me, and I know that if I fall into a swoon here, with no means of relief at hand, I shall, in all probability, die in it."

He spoke calmly: but Anabel's pulses beat fast, and a mist seemed to rise before her eyes.

"How can you lie here so quietly, and take it all in this every day kind of way?" she gasped. "If I were in your place I could not help shrieking out with terror. I think I should beat myself against the stones—do anything to make me forget those creeping waves."

"I don't believe you would be such a coward at all," he said, looking up at her, with a light of reassuring confidence shining in his grey eyes. "I have been thinking of some of the many brave men who have met far more terrible deaths than that which threatens me, with the happiest faith and steadiness. But if you are to aid me, it must be at once."

"What shall I do?" she cried. "Shall I go, or try to send for your own man; or shall I hunt about for some of the fishermen?"

"It is better to try and get Browne here. You would only lose time in looking for the labouring people; they are, probably, all busy, away at their different employments. Besides, my foot is in such a dreadful state that I feel as if any arm but his must be the death of me." He drew a morsel of paper from his pocket, and wrote a few lines upon it, telling the exact part of the shore upon which he lay. "You may see some one on the road towards the Court, who can go faster than you would be able to walk. If you do, send this on. My love to Lucy, if you are not back in time," he added, as she turned away.

"I will get you help before it is too late, if I die in the effort,"

she cried, with rash impulsiveness, in broken sobbing tones, as she hurried off.

The neighbourhood of the coast was always lonely; to-day it seemed to be particularly deserted. Anabel had got over a mile of her anxious journey before she met anyone. This person was a man on horseback, who readily undertook to deliver the important message at the great house.

Having seen him ride off at full speed, Mrs. Lee retraced her steps to the strand. She found Philip sleeping tranquilly with a smile upon his parted lips, although the feeling of weariness and distress, caused by his constrained position, betrayed itself in all the lines of his face.

"I was dreaming of Lucy," he said, when he had become aware of Anabel's presence. "I thought we were meeting in the better land, after a long separation. I feel sure that is how it must be, for help can hardly arrive in time now: and no doubt things are better so; even for her it may perhaps be best. I have certainly had every right to expect to be, hereafter, a strong and sound man. Doctors have always held out the prospect to me, but, at present, I am often only a burthen to myself and to other people. You will assure my darling of my faithful affection."

"Oh, don't, don't," entreated his companion, throwing herself on the ground at his feet, and sobbing passionately.

"You would force me to be unhappy, when I have not been so hitherto," he said, faintly, making some uneasy motion, which brought a smothered exclamation of pain to his lips. Then silence fell upon them both, as they waited, and watched the waves creeping nearer and nearer, with a lapping, greedy, gurgling sound.

"It is horrible!" Anabel cried, suddenly, in a harsh, discordant voice.

"I have been for a long time trying to understand how it would be possible to unite one's will in everything with the Higher Will," Philip said softly, half to himself: "and I think I must have learned more about it than I had believed. I feel so perfectly content now. I will just wait for what He wills to do with me, and the feeling is better than anything else I have ever experienced."

"Do you mean to say that you are pleased to give up the beautiful world, your fair prospects—Lucy—everything?" she asked, almost angrily.

"Of a truth he is very covetous for whom God will not suffice," Philip answered, quietly.

The waves crept ever nearer and nearer. At last, Anabel stood up, for the waters dashed over the skirt of her dress. She moaned heavily; her face was pale and rigid.

"I wish you would go up on the cliffs, behind, where you would be safe," her companion said; but she shook her head and shuddered.

"I can escape at any moment," she whispered hoarsely. "I will stay with you while I may."

"If you will not go would you sit up here by me, and hold my hand in yours?" he entreated, for he was anxious to try and impart some of his own peaceful confidence to her by that mysterious medium, personal contact.

They had not been long placed thus, side by side together, before the waves began to wash away the sand underneath the stones upon which the sufferer's feet were supported. He clenched his hand at the torture this caused. Anabel turned aside and strained every nerve in an intense, agonising effort to catch any sound, except the swirl of the rushing tide; but her endeavour was vain. All the voices of nature seemed concentrated in that noise, and in that alone. At this instant, a dash of spray spattered upon her face. She looked round and saw that Philip was wet up to his knees, while the retreating water was carrying out a quantity of the gravel upon which he lay. His hand trembled in hers, and became icy cold; large beads of moisture gathered on his face, which was now of an ashy hue. She wiped his forehead. "Are you in pain?" she asked. His lips formed an affirmative answer, but no sound came from them, and she perceived that he was rapidly becoming unconscious. She tried to shriek the words, "Will they never come?" but the parched mouth refused to utter an audible sentence. Her whole soul went up, however, in a wild mental prayer to Heaven, and a few minutes later she was hardly surprised to hear what she took to be supernatural voices answering her. But help was sent in a bodily form. She saw several men come round the projecting ridge of stones, a short way from where she sat, wading in water almost up to their waists; and then Browne stood beside her and took his master into his arms.

She and Lucy sobbed and cried upon each other's necks that evening.

"I have changed my mind," Anabel said. "I do not feel sure now that you are quite worthy of your lover."

"And I know I am not," was the young girl's tearful and passionate reply.

The letters were always laid upon the breakfast-table at Ussher Court; and this next morning as usual Anabel seemed greatly pleased with a short epistle she received. When she had glanced through it, she looked across the daintily spread board at Lucy, whose face was pale and sorrowful. Her thoughts were evidently with her lover, who lay on a sofa in the library. Bob sat next to her, and he was taking advantage of her abstraction of mind by stealing away an unopened envelope. He fancied it would be an excellent joke if he could succeed in pocketing this unobserved; and was considering at what hour of the day he should return it, when the young widow spoke suddenly to his tutor, who was also eating his breakfast in silent thoughtfulness. A great change had come over William Stuart's whole demeanour and appearance within the last few days. His voice was

no longer confident and gay; his brow was moody, and his eyes gleamed flashes of angry discontent, rather than sunshine and merriment, as of old. He started when Mrs. Lee addressed him, apologising to her for his inattention.

"I only told you that you ought to keep Bob in better order," she replied, smilingly. "I see he is purloining a letter from his neighbour. He does not seem to know what a great lady he is trying to play tricks upon."

Lucy turned her blue eyes reproachfully upon her friend. "A great lady! What do you mean?" she said.

"I mean, my dear, that you are a great heiress. I have just had a letter from your uncle, that very wealthy old bachelor. He tells me that he is, at once, about to make what he calls a suitable settlement upon you, while you are eventually to possess his whole property. I should say he is worth, at the least, five or six thousand a year. So you see I did right in calling you a great lady."

I need hardly dwell upon the sensation that this open announcement of Lucy's splendid prospects made in the household. No one felt more astonished at the change in her fortune than did the principal person concerned. Her father, a poor clergyman, had married a portionless Italian maiden, and had given deep offence to his rich brother by so doing. The latter had cast off all affectionate connection with the struggling couple; but, when their child was left a portionless orphan, he had interested himself a little in her fate. He had been appointed one of Anabel's guardians, and it was at his request that she had, on her widowhood, taken Lucy to live with her as a companion. It was very improbable, however, that he would have troubled himself any more about her, had not Mrs. Lee written to tell him that her protégée had made a conquest at Ussher Court of no less a person than Sir John Ussher's eldest son and heir.

"Of course, dear Lucy must not think of leaving us while poor Philip is laid up with his foot," Lady Ussher said that afternoon, drawing her future daughter-in-law to her side, and imprinting a kiss upon her fair cheek.

But Anabel was to leave next day; and, in spite of the pleasure she felt in her friend's happiness, she was oppressed by a weight of care and uneasiness. William Stuart, as I said before, was also moody and heavy-hearted. He and the young widow, Eva, and Bob, spent that last evening in the gardens. When it began to grow dusk, the two former suddenly found themselves alone together. A great tree shivered and whispered above their heads. Underneath this a rustic seat had been placed. They sat down, but very unsociably far apart. There was silence between them, but they did not find it more golden than speech. On the contrary, the heart of each was possessed by a bitter jealousy of all Nature's creatures, animate and inanimate, by which they were surrounded. The birds, the breezes, the distant brooks, and the mur-

muring grasses, all could discourse after their fashion with their kind. For them alone it seemed as if there existed no language in which to convey the thoughts burning and consuming their separate souls.

At last Anabel sighed and spoke, uttering a very commonplace remark. "Had you ever your fortune told?" she inquired.

He answered her by simply ejaculating the monosyllable, "No."

"I once had," she went on, timidly pursuing the same subject. "A gipsy read my hand, and she told me I was to be—twice married."

"The second husband was to be a prince, of course," her companion rejoined, sarcastically.

She paid no attention to the rudeness of his manner; but, giving a little gasp for breath, she began again, speaking coolly and deliberately, as though reciting a lesson learned off by heart. "I do not intend to marry a rich man, or a grand man. I will not marry an old man, either."

"Would you marry me?" he said, with almost savage abruptness.

"If you asked me properly, perhaps I might," Anabel answered, breaking forth into a sob of distress.

After that they both made rapid progress in the science of interchanging thought by speech, and there was no longer a wide space between them upon the rustic seat.

"Do you know what I was invited to Ussher Court for?" Anabel asked, suddenly, as they rose to return indoors.

"No; unless just to pay a visit—and perhaps to meet me," William Stuart replied, with a glance which was at the same time wondering and full of mirthful glee.

"I was brought here expressly to marry Philip Ussher," the young widow said, with a very solemn air.

"What!" exclaimed her companion, speaking in tones of alarmed surprise. "Then, in that case, as things are now, I suppose I shall lose my situation?"

"I should have imagined that, as things are now, you must, in any case, have lost it," Anabel answered, demurely.



"I WOULD BE A SHAKESPEARE."

"WHAT would you like to be?"—A group of boys stood round me, And I questioned half in merriment, but the faces grew intent, And replies were promptly rendered, as though little thought were needed; Each had some favourite fancy, or at least some natural bent.

"I should like to be a soldier," "I a sailor," were the answers;

"An engineer," "a farmer," "a harlequin," "a clerk"—

One voice alone was silent, but the eager lips were parted, And the deep grey eyes gleamed full of light beneath their lashes dark.

"And you?" I asked with interest, turning towards the stooping figure.

Then the colour flushed with feeling the smooth young cheek and brow:

"I should like to be a Shakespeare"—and, though a mocking laugh rang round him,

The boy was far too earnest his choice to disavow.

I smiled myself and ventured,—“You may be perhaps a poet,

But”—and then I stopped abruptly: leave time its work to do;

Let experience, the stern teacher, dissolve the dream when need be;

Why bring up earth's cold mists to cloud the heaven's ethereal blue?

When the morning yet is fresh, and all the air is laden

With the scent of rosy blossoms blown in hope's sunny dells,

Why summon heat of noonday to dry up dew and fragrance?

Why drown with fact's harsh clangour the ring of fairy bells?

So I moralized demurely:—"You take a lofty model;

But the noblest is the safest; we cannot aim too high;

Who keeps his eyes upon the ground will trip at points of danger;

He climbs the best who fearless treads, his gaze upon the sky."

The boy drank in my common words as though the draught were nectar;

His eyes caught added radiance from a glowing inward fire;

His heart spoke through his raptured face—"Then the dream is not all folly:

Better to try and not succeed than never to aspire."

He left the noisy circle—his compeers and his playmates—

The lads of boisterous spirits, sharper wits, but smaller soul,

And passed into the shadowy world to win a crown of laurel

For the brow where glimmered even now a mystic aureole.

"I should like to be a Shakespeare!" You will be perchance a hero—

A dauntless battler for the right; the foe of all things wrong;

A martyr to some worthy cause; the friend of truth and justice;

An upholder of the law that guards the weak against the strong.

This were grander than your vision; yet our Master points still higher:

Bids us look to Him whose splendour fills the boundless heavens above;

Be perfect e'en as He—the great God and gracious Father;

Copy line by line the pattern He has lent us in His love.

Raise your standard to this loftiest height, you would-be king of poets;

Take Christ as your ideal; make your life a noble song;

Let your soul be that perfection which includes all lesser beauties;

For what were even Shakespeare's gift 'mong the glorious angel throng?

EMMA RHODES.